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RAGLAND CASTLE:

**A TALE
OF THE GREAT REBELLION.**

BY MRS. THOMSON,

**AUTHOR OF
"WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS;" "ANNE
BOLEYN," ETC.**

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE reader who is well acquainted with the disastrous period of the great Rebellion, will perceive that the main incidents of this work are based upon history. The siege of Wardour, which forms so prominent a feature in my tale; the events near Basing House, and the destruction of Ragland Castle, derive any interest which they may possess in these volumes, from the truth of their details, rather than from the fiction with which they are interwoven.

For some anachronisms there must be indulgence claimed from the critic—(and who is not now a critic?)—who may think it worth while to peruse a composition

which scarcely aspires to the dignity of an historical romance, and may more strictly be termed "A Tale of the Great Rebellion." The characters which are described are mostly real — although, in some instances, made to act a different part to that which they performed in life. Those conversations in which Charles the First and his loyal subject the first Marquis of Worcester are introduced, owe much to a little book, now seldom read, but very curious, entitled "Apophthegms by James I., Charles I., and the Marquis of Worcester."

London, March 15th, 1843.

RAGLAND CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

How love came in, I do not know,
Whether by th' eye, or ear, or no ;
Or whether with the soul it came,
At first, infused with the same ;
Whether in part, 'tis here or there,
Or, like the soul, whole every where,
This troubles me ; but I, as well
As any other, this can tell,—
That when from hence she does depart,
The outlet then is from the heart.

HERRICK.

THE ancient castle of Wardour, seated under a natural amphitheatre of hills, surrounded by woods, and commanding extensive and beautiful views, is now a mass of ruins, clothed with ivy. Few traces remain of that baronial splendour which characterised this dwelling of an honoured family, the Arundels of Wardour. The destructive force of a merciless power has

leveled the lofty turrets, the elaborate chimneys, the stately portal: the character of magnificence has merged into that of the picturesque.

Time was, however, when a prosperous, united, and happy family dwelt beneath that roof, of which those who still cherish the poor remains of Wardour, can trace only the fragments; time was, when the old hall—before the retirement of the modern parlour was adopted—sheltered beneath its arches—now, alas! “the apartment of the owl”—a joyous assemblage of relatives, from age to infancy; whilst numerous, and, as it proved, devoted retainers, flitted along a well-spread board, or contributed, some by the arts of needlework, some by musical skill, some by care, some by humble duties, daily and individually, to the comfort and well-being of their superiors.

It was during the month of May—after that ominous cloud of civil war had begun to threaten England, before remorse and anguish had succeeded political fury, whilst men were still blinded to conse-

quences, that a group, whose destiny was, fatally, mingled up with the events of the time, lingered in the old library of Wardour. The party were of all ages, from the unconsciousness of childhood to the calmness of age. Between these periods, there was the wife of ten years' standing, the man of middle life; the artist, veteran in courts, the young girl just set free from conventual restraint; the youth, a few years her senior; those "whose sweet youth, and early hopes," enhance

"Their rate and price, and mark them for a treasure;"

those who, displaying more than the sensibility of childhood, possessed not, happily for themselves, the forethought of age.

In the centre of the room, a fair creature, some four or five-and-twenty years of age, turned a pale and anxious face upon her husband, who leaned over the wrought and massive chair upon which she sat. Two children stood near the Lady Cecily, as she was called, although the wife only of a commoner, Henry,

afterwards Baron Arundel, of Wardour. But the tremulous being who now gazed with unspeakable distress on the face of Arundel, had been, when married to this, the object of her true preference, a widow of sixteen, parental command having united her, at the age of fifteen, to Sir John Fermor.

The partner of her affections, Henry Arundel, was a man of moderate stature, but of a powerful frame, the activity of which was not impeded by a suit of light armour which he wore. His countenance was manly, and intelligent rather than handsome, displaying, however, the high features of the race from which he was partly descended — the Somersets of Ragland.

There was a conjugal parley between these two persons; not,—be witness, ye household deities, Patience and Obedience!—in the form of an argument; no! it was tender, timid, bewailing, on the part of the lady; a kind assurance on that of her fond and flattered husband.

Earnest whispering had been going on

for some time ; it had subsided. Colonel Arundel—for he was, like all the world, military — had contented his timorous Cecily, as he called her. He was holding her hand in his, and parting from her brow the tendril-like ringlets of her hair, which had been moistened by her tears, when Lady Cecily resumed conversation :

“ But the gates will be closed when thou reachest Salisbury ! It will be dark ! There is no moon ! When *shall* I hear from thee ? When *will* Sir Balthazar come back to us ? ”

These words were caught by an aged artist, somewhat fantastically, though shabbily, dressed, who was standing before an easel at the other extremity of the room, putting the last touches upon the portrait of a fine young man who sat opposite.

Sir Balthazar Gerbier, architect, painter, wit, courtier, author, as he was, stepped forward at the mention of his name, and then drew back, for the conversation between the married pair had relapsed into a whisper.

The stillness was again broken by a young voice.

"Mother," said a boy about nine years of age, who stood holding his father's hand, "there is a moon; don't you remember, at even-song, last night? — and, oh! father will ride to Salisbury quite safe!"

Colonel Arundel withdrew his eyes for a few minutes from the face of his wife, to rest them on the young speaker, his eldest son; on whom that fond and proud parental gaze was not again—such was the course of events—to rejoice after that evening of separation, until after a long and painful period.

The boy, whose affection, quickened into thought and care by daily communion with his parents, had prompted the simple consolation, was at that age which some, unjustly, call awkward, when the energy of childhood succeeds the restless and reckless enjoyment of infancy. Methinks it is pleasant to those who contemplate the future man, to see the rounded limbs grow muscular, the step become

firm, the careless eye arrested in its wandering glance by reflection. With dark bright eyes sparkling beneath a clear high brow, dark chestnut locks, curling—as children of condition then wore the hair, even down upon the shoulders—a slight, erect form, and a mouth curled and proud when closed, all sweetness when opened to speak, the little Everard, for so he was called, looked indeed an object for a mother's vanity and a father's hopes.

The Lady Cecily laid her fair hand on her boy's tresses as he spoke, and a smile and look, directed to her husband, told their mutual feelings. But, in an instant, she stooped to kiss the little one who sat at her feet,—her youngest child, a boy of six,—whose flaxen tresses were rested indolently upon her knee, contrasting with the rich dark velvet of her gown.

Again, a silence; and again it was broken by a sudden laugh at the other end of the room. The Lady Cecily and her husband turned round.

“Blanch!” exclaimed Lady Cecily, re-

provingly, looking at a young lady, who, seated on a low stool, was watching the progress of the picture which Sir Balthazar was painting.

“Well, Cecily!” was the undaunted reply. “I must needs laugh,” added the girl, coming forward, “at the pretension of some people; to wit, my cousin Herbert. Why, Sir Balthazar cannot content him with the portrait. He expects to have the handsome features of Lord Lindesay, the complexion of Lord Kimbolton, the wit of Master George Wharton. Come, come, cousin,” she continued, seeing that her mirth was not responded to by the languishing Cecily; “I do it but to make thee merry. She will be merrier when ye are gone; we shall all be better when free from our tyrants”—glancing at Mr. Herbert—“and when we, poor womankind, are left alone.”

The looks of the fair speaker who thus addressed the wedded pair, might be deemed by many more eloquent than her words. Her air and manner had all the buoyancy of unbroken happiness; her

face, one of those flexible and beautiful countenances which change momentarily, had a vivacity of expression well corresponding with the bloom of health by which it was tinted. There was the freshness of Nature, as when we look upon her in sunshine, after showers; but it was nature in a state of refinement and cultivation. No simpering follies, no flippancy, destroyed the charm of her gay spirits and of a face and form surpassingly attractive and lovely.

Blanch Somerset, or, as she was called by her own family, Blanch the Younger, was the niece and godchild of the Lady Arundel of Wardour, and cousin of Colonel Arundel. At this early age, for she was scarcely seventeen, in conformity with customs then, and long after that period, prevailing, she was already betrothed to a kinsman, Edward Herbert, the young man who, with meritorious patience, when she was present, sat through the elaborate finishing of Gerbier's hard pencil.

The betrothed couple looked shyly at

each other, boy and girl-like; but the future lord and master of the merry and saucy Blanch was by far the most embarrassed, and, as it might seem, the least comfortable, when they were together, of the affianced pair; for, if the truth must be told, he loved—she did not; and the sole aim of Blanch, during the time prescribed for them to be in each other's company, was to get through the day as well as she could. At present, she did not relish Mr. Herbert's society. He was a boy, and she liked men, not boys; she liked, that is to say, intellectual companions, from whom she could learn the news of the court, the camp, the city. And she wondered why her relatives, in the plenitude of their kindness, should tie her to one whom she regarded as little better than a walking-stick.

“Poor Herbert!” whispered Cecily to her husband; “he is very handsome, is he not? but she never will like him! She vows”—and Lady Cecily lowered her voice still more,—“that when that picture is finished, she shall carry it up to the

gallery, and bid the house-maidens, as if by mistake, use it for a chimney-screen."

Colonel Arundel, pleased to see his wife diverted, as women, if they were dying, would be, by a little mischief in any of their sex, smiled; and both he and Cecily fixed their eyes on Herbert.

"Let us look at Sir Balthazar's last touches," said Colonel Arundel, taking his wife's hand, and leading her to the easel.

"Now, Master Edward, now you will have your wish," cried Blanch,—“that all the world should see and admire. Pray, Sir Balthazar, is the Prince Rupert, is Prince Maurice, nay, is his gracious Majesty, who is passably well favoured, I suppose, one half as vain-glorious, on the score of beauty, as this young gentleman? 'Tis mightily flattered,” she added, looking on the picture; “a little more yellow paint here, a little less carmine there, will, methinks, improve the resemblance vastly.”

“—And, considering for *whom* it is intended,” replied Sir Balthazar, turning his wizened face, smoke-dried as it was, in Blackfriars, where the munificent Charles

maintained a number of artists, "and for whose pleasure I am hastening to finish it——"

"—And on what occasion it will be hereafter produced,—" interposed Colonel Arundel.

"—And that I hope to have a fair companion to it, some day," pursued Sir Balthazar, his lack-lustre eye twinkling as he spoke.

"You forget, Sir Balthazar," cried Blanch, colouring, and with sudden gravity, "that my poor cousin is going away to-night; jests are not seemly; not that I care about them! Jest! who can jest when the country is full, from one end to the other, of militia and trained-bands? when our King is driven from his capital, and, very like, we may be the next to be driven out from this fair abode at the will and pleasure of the Roundheads? I marvel that you can jest, Sir Balthazar!"

"An admirable method of turning the discourse, madam," replied the painter. "Colonel Arundel, see you not a great family resemblance in this picture? The

arched eyebrows of the Somersets, their high brow;" and he glanced at Blanch, who, turning precipitately away, ran off with the youngest of the two children into the recess of a bay window.

Colonel Arundel, absent as a man must be who revolves a gloomy future in his mind, looked carelessly at the picture. It did no more than justice to its subject. A fine, tall, manly figure, set off by that costume which, in point of elegance, has never been exceeded,—a loose doublet, or coat, with a broad collar of vandyke lace, tied at the throat with a silken cord, slashed and falling sleeves, deep cuffs of lace, turned back, and all of the richest texture, — well became a young and yet stately form, not yet worn with toils that bowed down many an elastic frame, ere the national contest was brought to its close.

The countenance of Edward Herbert was mildly thoughtful, but its play was checked by a constitutional shyness which, at this early age, was the more becoming that it was rare. Beneath a reserve

painful to himself, powerful abilities, great energy, and strong passions were hidden. Of such materials were formed those men, whose great examples illumined, whose mournful fate saddened, the times ; Falkland, Lindesay, Dormer, were men of like mould with the modest, but undeveloped, Edward Herbert.

In true cavalier guise, with long waving locks, somewhat thrown back from his forehead, it was impossible to look at Mr. Herbert and to subscribe to the "unloveliness of love locks." Glossy and rich in tint, the tresses of young Herbert set off his fine complexion, and enhanced the symmetry of regular features. His eyes were dark and soft, and a small moustache, curling upwards, showed the form of a finely-marked upper lip, not so short as to denote weakness, nor so long as to give a prosaic look of compression and gravity to the face.

Somewhat confused by the inspection of his portrait, Mr. Herbert rose ; and, seemingly desirous of changing the conversation, inquired of Sir Balthazar how

long it would be before the portrait would be completed.

"And are you, too, going to join the King at Oxford?" inquired the painter, who was contemplating the fruits of his exertions with great self-complacency.

"No, he is going on his travels, pretty boy," whispered Blanch, who now just emerged from her window, and flitted away into a gallery beyond the library.

"That's a challenge to follow, and punish her," said Mr. Herbert, colouring, and trying to laugh off his confusion; and he hastily ran down the gallery, leaving the painter, Lady Cecily, and one of their children, alone in the library.

Ere he had wholly disappeared, the door of the library was opened by a servant, and a lady, past middle age, walked composedly in. She was a woman of short stature, whose slight frame seemed little capable of the wonderful mental and corporeal exertions which she afterwards underwent, and whose small, inexpressive features seemed scarcely to indicate the high heroism which circumstances

subsequently called forth. But it is in domestic life that the qualities of fortitude, disinterestedness, presence of mind, are sometimes most successfully cultivated; and a woman who performs her homely duties well, will seldom be found deficient in principle, or weak in action when important occasions demand her exertions.

Descended from an ancient race, whose royal blood was not, indeed, free from the taint of illegitimacy—the Somersets of Ragland — Lady Arundel, who now stood near the easel of Gerbier, had married, early in life, Lord Arundel, of Wardour, a nobleman who possessed her affections, and who professed the faith of her family, for they were Roman Catholics. Many summers had passed over her head, since Lady Arundel had plighted her troth, for she was now verging upon what, in those days, was deemed old age—her sixtieth year. An oval-brimmed black hat, was placed upon locks, still of a light brown—for they were false—and those minute and cork-screw curls were

hung about with pearls. A tippet, narrow and flat, of sable shrouded her shoulders; but the throat, garnished with some ornaments around it, was left open, and showed how delicately fair the complexion of the baroness had been in early youth. At first, her countenance seemed, to a superficial view, feeble in its expression; but a shrewd eye, a firm, compressed mouth, quickly undeceived those who studied the lineaments of Blanch of Arundel; for thus, by a name which she has handed down to fame, this celebrated woman has been designated by historians.

There was a half playful, half stern look directed to the receding figure of Edward Herbert, as Lady Arundel said, after a moment's reflection, "I must put a stop to this foolery; but that task must be undertaken to-morrow. Blanch gives me much—much uneasiness," she added, as if speaking to herself; "but we must not muse on small vexations."

"— My dear Henry," pursued Lady Arundel, addressing her son, who arose

respectfully on her entrance; "a word with you and Cecily,—nay, Sir Balthazar, would you fain withdraw? Then if you will, yet I blush to permit you, have the goodness to look after the young couple, yonder in the gallery, and see that that untoward child does not torment Master Edward, until he throw himself into the fish-pond. Little need of self-murder in these days," pursued Lady Arundel, turning to her son, as the painter left the room. "The man who seeks death, may easily find it. Cecily, my heart, look up; let us trust that this great storm may pass over our heads."

"Madam," said Colonel Arundel, struggling with strong natural feelings, for his attachment to his wife was that of a first love, "have you aught more especially to say to my father? I may tell him, that I left you well, happy, secure; without a concern, save for the welfare of the good cause, without a care, save for his happiness?"

"You may say to my lord, Henry, that your mother is indeed well, for she is

in her home—his home, mine. She is well, because she has many affairs whereon to employ her poor abilities. She is happy, forsooth, because she trusts in her Redeemer, and the holy saints and angels who watch over the good cause. Tell him, also—thou knowest that when my Lord left me, he charged me never to surrender this, our ancient and goodly abode, without defending it to the last—that I will do so if, *Deo volente*, health and life be spared me. But I fear no surprise.”

“No,” answered Colonel Arundel. “I fear no surprise.” He glanced at his wife and children, and a momentary quiver of the lip betrayed emotions which he chose not to utter.

“Then I think,” said Lady Arundel, firmly, “our good resolutions had best not be shaken, by long leave-takings. Come, Cecily, thou hast gazed long enough on thy help-meet. Bid him take refreshment, thou solace; and then, Henry, hie thy way! Remember, as far as thy mother’s wedding-dowry may aid our Sovereign’s failing treasury, to my last noble it may be relied on.”

“O!” exclaimed Cecily, mournfully, “if money would do, if it could be accepted instead of service! how freely would *my* lands be offered!”

“Fie Cecily! fie,” cried Colonel Arundel, caressing her nevertheless; and, wishing to divert the conversation into another channel, he said,

“You will not, madam, I conjecture, detain that handsome boy, Herbert, here much longer. He and Blanch have met, their courtship has been begun, their say has been said, and now, I suppose, they will not meet again until both are of an age to bind still closer the indissoluble contract?”

“To tell you the truth,” Lady Arundel returned gravely, “I am somewhat desirous that Blanch’s affections should be captivated ere her hand is given. I will even now disclose to you wherefore. It has been concealed from my lord’s family, dear Henry, and from you, and from my lackadaisical Cecily here, that my poor brother John Somerset’s wife, Blanch’s mother, disgraced our lineage.

I need not tell you how ; a woman may be cross-grained, a spendthrift, a meddler, jealous, mad : but there is one crime by which she is for ever lost and disgraced. When she became my sister, this frail creature was the most lovely, innocent, playful being in existence. We used to call her Perdita, so much she resembled that fair creature of honest Will's fancy. Ah ! the name was but too well applied."

" She is dead ? " asked Colonel Arundel.

" No, — yes, dead to all that can make life happy, — but not to me. Your mother's starch reputation, my dear Henry, can stand the risk of visiting the guilty, and consoling the contaminated—and she is penitent. But to the purpose ; in the convent cell, wherein this wretched woman has found refuge, she disclosed to me the cause of her errors, — the excuse, I should say ; for the cause lies in our sinning nature. She was betrothed at fourteen ; but between that period and the wedding-day was a season bright and brief, and the fair creature, loathed, yes loathed my brave and handsome brother,

him who loved her so, that, on her desertion, he is thought to have sought his death in the foremost ranks of danger—to his anguish I can well attest, for I was with him at the time she fled.”

“She, then, loved before her marriage the nobleman who lured her from her home?” inquired Colonel Arundel.

“She did, and when, by her wish, I adopted this poor child, Blanch, I vowed that, when the time of her disposal, for such it is, arrived, that she should be introduced to the husband chosen for her early, not waiting until her young fancy is ensnared. I wish her to have the happiness, the security, of love.”

“Yet events are not in our power,” said Colonel Arundel, thoughtfully.

“I have now done my part, Henry; for some weeks the young ones have freely conversed, and Herbert must go forth on his travels—must fit himself for the great sphere in which he is to move; but I shall not forbid their correspondence by letter. Marry they must, love they may: let us not anticipate evils.”

"Blanch has a good heart, though a wilful temper," observed Colonel Arundel, as, on the great bell sounding, he took his mother's hand to lead her to the hall.

"And she loves you, madam, passionately," added the gentle Cecily, following with her two boys.

Blanch, Mr. Herbert, and Sir Balthazar were already at the dinner-table; and, whatever forwardness the young lady might display in private, on such state occasions as the grave repast at which the whole family were assembled her aspect was perfectly demure.

The hall of Wardour Castle, dismantled as it has ever since been, was then in all the beauty of entire preservation. A display of well-burnished armoury hung against its oak-panneled walls; the oriel windows were filled with implements for sylvan sports; but the chief object in the hall was a celebrated chimney-piece, on one side sculptured by artists of the first character, and erected by the last Lord Arundel, who bestowed no less a sum

than two thousand pounds upon this single decoration of the stately apartment.

At the lower end of the hall, underneath a range of coats-of-mail and helmets, hung a row of leathern jerkins, worn as armour by the vassals of the Wardour property, whilst pistols, guns, and matchlocks were strewed about underneath these garments. Such was the mixture of elegance and rudeness in times just emancipated from feudal customs, yet not far advanced in refinement. Lady Arundel, passing before a long file of servants and dependants, walked with much state to the orsille, a high table placed upon a raised platform at the extremity of the hall. Here, with her chaplain, the various members of her family, and the only visitor then at the Castle, Lady Arundel, after listening to a Latin grace, and reverently crossing herself, sat down to table.

The repast was not a cheerful one amongst those who, from their eminent position, looked down upon the functionaries who reveled in coarse, but plentiful, fare at the lower table. Amongst those

who sat above the salt-cellar in the hall were the officers of a small troop selected from the tenantry, who were to form the escort to Colonel Arundel, and that escort was to be required immediately after the noon-day meal.

A flourish of instruments from the music-gallery — for Wardour had still its minstrels — proclaimed the close of dinner; and Lady Arundel, rising, bowed to the company at the nether table, and, followed by the ladies, withdrew, those assembled reverently standing up until the hall-door was closed by her ladyship's pages.

Lady Arundel passed through a range of stately chambers, through the latticed windows of which might be seen a fair and fertile country, not yet devastated by marauding troops. Devoted attendants waited on her within her baronial residence; without doors a tenantry, attached by many years' bounty, and by daily acts of condescension, proffered their homage whenever she rode forth from the enclosure of the park. A

loving family taught her the value of her life. In the social circle, at the court of her sovereign, — even of the decorous and irreproachable Charles the First, — her reputation for discretion, courtesy, acquirement, was at its height. The monarch was her personal friend. All these circumstances of happiness, aided by the possession of a princely fortune, were, in the well-poised and yet deeply-feeling mind of Lady Arundel, piously considered, not with exultation, but as blessings which ought to compensate for some which were denied, and to reconcile her to deprivations which came, as well as benefits, from the hand of her Creator.

For, after a union of forty years, or thereabouts, in the decline of life, and when the “sere and yellow leaf” comes without sorrow to the affectionate and united heads of a prosperous family, Lady Arundel had seen the husband of her youth set forth to aid his sovereign, without a hope that the righteous cause would eventually prosper. She, whose cares had

hitherto been divided, had been left to the sole management of an extensive estate,—of a domestic garrison ; for such it was necessary to render Wardour during the commotions. She had parted with one over whose comfort she had hoped faithfully and fondly to watch ; and care, apprehension, anxiety, had come to her ten-fold upon that most mournful and, as it proved, final separation.

Another domestic trial was at hand—her son was now to leave her ; but the spirit of submission was not exhausted. Lady Arundel bowed meekly to circumstances which she could not control. She remembered that there was yet a greater sufferer—the gentle and affectionate Lady Cecily.

The parting was hurried and silent. Colonel Arundel, not of a sanguine nature, yet willingly—such was the enthusiasm of those brave spirits who were extinguished in the fatal strife—willingly sacrificing home, fortune, friends, to the duty of loyalty, looked around upon the happy and splendid abode where his early

married life had been passed, a foreboding came over him that he should behold it no more — a few words of tender admonition to his sons, a silent embrace of his mother and wife, and, amid the good wishes and tears of a troop of servants who gathered around him as he passed through the hall, he departed.

Sir Balthazar accompanied Colonel Arundel. A strict charge was enjoined, that the painter should return in a few days from Salisbury, where he had business, and bring sure tidings of the absent son and husband. I will not describe the desolation of those who were left behind, for the annalist of times so fearful must have but too many of similar domestic trials to record.

CHAPTER II.

Give me more love, or more disdain ;
 The torrid or the frozen zone :
 Bring equal ease unto my pain ;
 The temperate affords me none.
 Either extreame, of love or hate,
 Is sweeter than a calm estate.

Give me a storme ; if it be love,
 Like Danaë in that golden showre,
 I swimme in pleasure ; if it prove
 Disdain, that torrent will devoure
 My vulture hopes ; and he's possess
 Of Heaven that's but from Hell releast ;
 Then crowne my joyes, or cure my pain ;
 Give me more love, or more disdain.

GEO. CAREW.

By noon on the following day the tears of Lady Cecily were dried, and she walked with her boys on the grand terrace, running along the side of that hill which formed the back-ground of War-dour Castle.

The figures of Cecily and her sons

looked gay in the sunshine; her scarlet mantle, her slouched hat and drooping feather; her stately walk—for, though now the domestic wife, Cecily had once been the high-bred toast of a county; the dark, richly-embroidered suits of Everard and his brother,—set off, as they were, by deep collars of Vandyke-edged cambric; their soft, long locks, which were blown back by the wind; the frolicsome greyhounds which accompanied the high-born children; their graceful bearing, and the deferential attendance of a male servant who followed them, formed altogether a suitable accompaniment to the bold, majestic castle of which little Everard was the destined heir.

The varied tints of Autumn suggest a common theme; those of Spring—more gradual, more delicate,—have been disparaged in the comparison: yet what can be more beautiful than the tender colour of the opening chestnut, before its spiral blossoms rise, like frosted pinnacles, symmetrically set as if by architectural skill? How feathery are the sweeping

boughs of the beech! how soft its verdure! how finely contrasting its stems! The very birds seem as if they were paying tribute to the universal loveliness of their sylvan haunts. Variety is the order of the day — variety of colours, from the deep purple of the copper beech, to the rich brown of the unfolding oak; from the dark shade of the “ancestral yew” to the mantling and snowy blossoms of the hawthorn. Variety of sounds from every bird and beast; the deep bellowing of the distant bull, sole relic, in England, of savage times, is succeeded by the soft rustling of trees, or the plashing of the streamlet, or the tender strains of the young nightingale, scarcely conscious of her powers, but hastening to gladden the hours of merry May, robbing night of her privileges, and delighting all day long the contemplative man; — and who knows but that the little rival warblers may, from the beneficence which guides their common lot, be also conscious of that true enjoyment which beauty and harmony impart?

Lady Cecily and her boys sauntered along the broad and grassy terrace. Above was the rugged hill, its bold features shrouded by a hedge of yew; below, beyond their home, an expanse of a fair and cultivated country, the smoke of cottages in the distance, the spire of some neighbouring church alone interfering with the solitary grandeur of the Castle. Dense woods, — stately groups of trees, — denoted the wealth and antiquity of that domain which was now all tranquillity, upon which its denizens looked without an apprehension that ever other heads and hands should be concerned in the dominion of that magnificent possession.

Little recked the children of future greatness; the present was all in all to them. The present! — can we call it so? — the next hour, — minute, — bounded their future! Everard was impatient to mount his palfrey, and ride with his groom and his dogs: Claude was wearying his mother to go to the fish-pond, where, with the mimicry of great men, — truly great, for they display the virtue of patience,

—he might sit on the brink, and fancy himself destructive. Presently, as they passed an ancient arbour, formed within the hedge, and furnished with a seat, Everard observed to Lady Cecily, “They are quarrelling so !”

“Never heed them,” answered Lady Cecily; and she hastened down a moss-grown bank, and, seating herself near the edge of a pond, in which the water-ranunculus, like a sheet of snow, showed how few anglers disturbed the waters, gave herself up to the calm of the scene, whilst her sons sported on the grass beside her. Poor children ! how often, in the terrors of the guard-room, in the gloom of the prison-chamber, in the absence of tenderness, nay, when their young spirits were broken by harsh words, did they think upon that sunny bank ; breathe, in fancy, the fresh air ; pine for the comforting voice, the common indulgences of a spoiled and careless childhood,—and in vain !

“They look happy, do they not ?” asked Edward Herbert, who, in the bower, by permission of Lady Arundel, enjoyed a

parting interview with Blanch ; “ they seem so happy ! ” he repeated, watching the countenance of his betrothed as she followed Lady Cecily and the boys with her eyes, — “ Surely, there is something truly attractive in what you call the sameness of domestic life—to—to congenial minds ? ”

“ I do not know—I like to think of more stirring or amusing scenes, better,” returned Blanch carelessly.

The young man was standing by her ; after a moment’s irresolution he sat down.

“ You have peopled the gay world with heroes of your imagination, I have no doubt,” he said.

“ There is no occasion for *my* fancy to be severely tasked, Master Herbert—our country is full of heroes ! I am sure I dream of one or two, in particular, night and day. There is my Lord Dormer, of Wenge, whom the Roundheads have chosen to exempt from pardon, I hear, should he ever be their prisoner. Ah ! would he accept their mercy ? I have been enamoured of *this* hero ever since

he pursued the enemy's troops even to their camp, near Wells, and was faced by Waller's dragoons; there, you remember, the handsome, the adorable Prince Maurice, came to his aid,—and a fine flight had the parliament-men to make before them."

"Then you have seen Prince Maurice—you are acquainted with my Lord Dormer?" asked Mr. Herbert, looking at the bright eyes which were lighted up by the enthusiasm of the moment.

"Only in pictures. Sir Anthony had just finished the Prince's before we left St. James's. Oh, it is handsome! You—you've been in those dull colleges all your days, so I suppose you can't tell me if 'tis like. But I know it is! There can be but one such pair of eyes in this wide world; they look into your very heart, and, if I live to be as old as my aunt Arundel, I never shall forget his smile!"

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Herbert, startled by the earnestness of her speech.

"—Then, such a noble, graceful, king-like figure! not boyish, and *point de vice*,

just come from the inspection of the court-tailor; but so erect, as if he defied all rivalry; and then his attire, so plain, so soldier-like, so manly!"

"I thought you praised bravery, and gorgeous attire," said Herbert, glancing, with a slight blush, at his own ruffles of exquisite lace, his satin mantle, and, as he now perceived, somewhat effeminate clasps of brilliants which, ranged down his person, sparkled obnoxiously in the sunshine.

"Yes, for a revel, or a mask; but not for a man who is to serve his country," returned Blanch, not vouchsafing a look; "but I forgot, you are going on your travels."

"No, I shall not quit the country," returned Edward Herbert, drawing himself up. "I shall *not* quit the country. I shall join the King at Oxford."

"But you're under age—you're a minor—an infant—don't they call it so in law?" said Blanch, looking at the youth with unfeigned contempt. "You can be of no use yet; you had better do as you are bidden for these three years, I suppose."

"For one year," replied Herbert, writhing under the inflictions of his affianced wife. "I shall be twenty-one, 1643, August first — if you care to know my birth-day."

"You sigh at the idea," observed Blanch, in a low tone.

"Because," answered the youth, with a sudden burst of passion, "I fear that the hope that has been held out to me all my life—the hope upon which I must live,—that the prospect of happiness, without which all that my fortune can give would be nothing, and which I am sure I could not exist without, will all end in disappointment.—You never will love me, Blanch; you never will give me your hand."

"Love you! give you my hand! Why I must love you, I suppose, when you are twenty-one;—I must give you my hand; we are affianced," replied Blanch, after some hesitation, and looking down. "I cannot help marrying you;—but don't let us talk on disagreeable subjects this fine day. My aunt said I was to sit half an hour in your company—didn't you hear it strike one?"

"But you assured me the other day," persisted the unhappy affianced husband, "that you never have been in love. Now, I am so afraid you should not understand your own feelings rightly. This Prince Maurice, this Lord Dormer, and"—

Blanch interrupted him with a laugh. "In love with a long sheet of canvas and a little paint! I *do* understand my feelings, Master Herbert; and I never shall love any one who is not a hero, and perhaps a martyr to the royal cause! A wound or two might very much improve *you* in my good opinion."

She spoke as if to raise the spirits of the despised youth; but poor Herbert, more matured in his feelings than she supposed him to be, was inexpressibly hurt by her evident indifference.

"Farewell, Blanch," he said, in an agitated voice. "It is one o' the clock. My attendants are ready, no doubt. If ever you wish to think of your kinsman, and the companion of some, to me, very happy hours," he continued, with a sigh—"if you shouldn't find that you absolutely dis-

like to look upon my resemblance"—he added, drawing from his pocket a small miniature set round with diamonds, "Lady Arundel permits me to offer this for your acceptance. I wish it was more worthy of the honour you will do me in wearing it—I wish it was more like—Prince Maurice!"

He pretended to be hastening away; it was only pretence. Poor Herbert! his feet were chained to the mosaic pavement of the elaborate bower; his heart was now, and for ever, in the power of one who loved him the less for the trammels which officious kindred and custom had contrived for the union of the young couple.

Blanch was touched by the true feeling of her betrothed. Her nature was kind,—her disposition so ingenuous that it was, however, difficult for her to say anything that she did not feel. Knowing nothing of the world, her imagination had cherished images of the great and the distinguished, whose virtues were enhanced ten-fold in her sight when their exertions were employed in the one cause

in which she was a perfect enthusiast—the king's quarrel with his parliament, as it was vulgarly denominated.

She took the picture from the trembling hand of young Herbert. The handsome features and expressive brow seemed to reproach her for her indifference.

“I do not mean to be uncivil, or unkind, Master Herbert. I dare say I shall like to look at the picture sometimes. These diamonds are so very sparkling, and the portrait is so curiously painted. How well the lace is done!—I do not like so much lace.”

“Should you have liked me in armour better?” asked young Herbert, with deep humility, so honoured and flattered,—for young men in those times were brought up in deferential adoration of the sex,—that she even condescended to criticise.

“Ask my aunt, for here she is,” cried Blanch, quite relieved to see Lady Arundel advance with measured step—a book in one hand, with the other pointing to the sun-dial on the terrace.

“Ye have forgotten time, young peo-

ple," said Lady Arundel, pleased as she spoke, that Blanch had been induced to bear the dreaded interview so long. "Whilst you have been wasting the hours in idle talk, I have been reading. These verses, Edward, are not inapplicable to those who enter upon life; they are written by our kinsman, George Herbert :—

' Fly idleness ! which yet thou canst not fly
By dressing, mistressing, and compliment ;
If those take up thy day, the sun will cry
Against thee ; for his light was only lent.
God gave thy soul brave wings ; put not those feathers
Into a bed, to sleep out all ill weathers.'

There is," pursued Lady Arundel, " meet advice also on friendship, love, matrimony—that may bide awhile."

Lady Arundel spoke and read with a grave sententiousness—the fashion of the day among ladies who affected learning; and many there were in those times who cultivated classical knowledge with the industry of men, and displayed their acquirements with the pedantry of women, who shone like bright constellations when all were ignorant.

“ And now, Edward, God be with you ! Do not defer setting out ; the road to Salisbury is not, in truth, quite so bad as our Monmouthshire roads. You remember the famous answer of Sir Richard ap Thomas, when asked by his gracious Majesty what roads there were from Chepstow to Monmouth. ‘ None, please your Majesty.’ ‘ And how then do ye travel ?’ ‘ In ditches, please your Majesty.’ ”

Poor Herbert remembered nothing at this moment either about roads or ditches. He was aroused from a reverie, which his interesting countenance, long locks, and musing attitude rendered very becoming, by Lady Arundel bidding him take the privilege of saluting his betrothed bride ere he departed. He gracefully, and respectfully obeyed ; and, though the blooming cheek was as much averted from him as it was possible to be, the moment was remembered in after-hours, when bitter emotions succeeded to fond hopes, and when the young and fine-spirited Herbert experienced what has since been asserted by a great moralist—“ that the sublunary

nature of the universe is exemplified in the instability of human friendships."

Long before the shadow of the sun-dial reached four, young Herbert was far from Wardour, carrying with him recollections on which his ardent mind fed—the stimulus to honourable exertions; for on the good soil of this young man's mind love acted as a kindly shower; his was the romance—not the passion; his imagination,—the untainted attribute of a pure and well-principled mind,—invested every cherished association with his future wife with what was pure, holy, worth living for, worth dying for, if needs must be. Her welfare, her fame, were objects next to his heart; for he had much of the manly sanctity which flourished in the court of Charles, by which women of reputation were invested with angelic privileges;—and his affections were elevated by respect, and dignified by constancy.

The ladies, who were thus left solitary, did not relapse into inertia. Lady Arundel had numerous and engrossing occupations to prevent her energetic mind from

sinking into depression. She was not, indeed, like the famous Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, "a builder, a buyer and seller of estates, a money-lender, a farmer, and a merchant of lead, coals, and tinder;" but she was forced to exercise the jurisdiction of her castle fort, with masculine energy; and to preserve, whilst yet she might, in the domain of her husband, that order and tranquillity the remembrance of which was now, in many parts of the kingdom, but as a pleasant dream. For war had now spread into almost every county of the once happy island, and each day brought some fresh disaster to that cause in which the fortunes of Lady Arundel and of her family were deeply involved. The king, after his futile march to Brentford, had returned to Oxford, borrowing, as he passed along, the arms of the different county militia who were still royalists. Henrietta had fled into Holland to pawn her jewels, and to raise assistance. Leeds had just been carried by storm, in the north. Warwick, Banbury, Kenilworth, were under the power of the parlia-

ment. The noted Sir William Waller had just blown up Farnham Castle; he was now proceeding southward—Winchester was already taken—Chichester was besieged.

Whilst affairs wore this threatening aspect, it was impossible that Lady Arundel could be well at ease; for she knew that, of all those who espoused the cause of the king, none were more obnoxious to the parliament than her husband, and her brother's family. For she was a Somerset; of that brave and loyal race, who, for principle—whether mistaken or not, it is not my concern to determine—lost their all; who at the peril of their existence, to the destruction of their princely homes, with the loss of liberty, or with the penalty of a life-long exile, sheltered the hunted and fugitive monarch under their roof; and, to the certain destruction of all that they valued, received him as a monarch, whose misfortunes could not obliterate the sense of duty; but of this more hereafter. Chepstow had been recently threatened; but Monmouthshire was yet secure; this

was the ancient and especial territory of the Somersets; and Henry, Earl of Worcester, the aged brother of Lady Arundel, awaited with calm determination, and with a strong garrison, an assault upon his "poor cottage of Ragland," as he was wont humorously to call the proud mansion which has few compeers. In this juncture, Lady Arundel, therefore, was sufficiently aware that she could look for no aid from her own family, should it please the rebel army—for so she designated them—to despoil the lands which, far and wide, spread their budding beauties at this most joyous season, tempting the rapacity and destruction which then, alas! characterised Englishmen almost as fiends. This was all she dreaded; for, to suppose that a parliamentary force should descend to invest and pillage a castle with only defenceless women and servants to meet their hostile force, appeared to Lady Arundel improbable. There was but one circumstance that, sometimes in the dead of night, when the thoughtful matron awoke to anxious

and solitary reflection, shook her feeling of security.

It was the period—one of those periods which have at intervals been remarkable in English history—when the bitterest gall that fanatical fury could deposit in the human breast was mingled with honest intentions on the part of the many ; sinister and selfish motives existed in the chosen few who led the councils of the army. The multitude were sincere when, some months afterwards, they accepted the solemn league and covenant, and believed it to be all done by the grace and to the glory of God. Of the generals, some were able instruments of a power very different from that which they had ever in their mouths. All, however, agreed in the emphatic, unrelenting determination to extirpate, “ without respect of persons, popery, prelacy, schism, profaneness, heresy, superstition, and whatsoever should be found contrary to the power of godliness ;” and solemn denunciations were uttered against those who should, by

deviating from the one straight path of avenging duty, "partake of other men's sins, and be in danger of receiving their plagues."

Sometimes, when the notes of the organ warned the pious lady of Arundel that vespers were begun in the chapel, and she hastened along the corridor to the gorgeous and gothic pile which was appropriated to the holy service, she wondered within herself, how long it would be permitted to her, and to her people, to worship there; whether that altar would ever be desecrated; its priests exiled; all that was holy and revered brought into impious derision. But, as she looked around upon the young members of her family, she checked all expression of these misgivings.

"Let them be happy," she muttered to herself, "let them be happy; it is their period. For me, my time is well-nigh past. Give them but safety! Oh, let these little ones be spared!"

CHAPTER III.

—Blood is too deare
A price for glory ; honour doth appeare
To statesmen like a vision in the night,
And, juggler-like, works o' th' deluded wight.
HABINGTON'S *Castara*.

ONE night, as Lady Cecily retired from the apartment in which her sons lay, side by side, having seen them laid down to repose, a light in the distance caught her eye, as she moved down a long gallery, into which, after the fashion of those days, the doors of the different sleeping-chambers opened. She stopped to observe. Was it a Will-o'-the-wisp which, far in the distance, flickered in the gloom of evening? No—the light was steady; it came undeviatingly forward. Now it was more distinct; now it multiplied, and many lights were seen. Then it became

stationary; and Cecily, behind an array of torches (for such she shortly perceived this nocturnal illumination to be), discerned a compact body of horsemen, whose halberds gleamed in the concentrated torch-light.

She flew to the bed-side of her boys; they were sleeping calmly; oh, how calmly! They were safe; they were unconscious. The sight of their young faces, the sound of their soft breathing, restored Cecily to composure;—who could hurt them? She called an aged servant from an inside apartment, and bidding her stand “there”—and, she pointed to the bed as she spoke—until she returned, she rushed into the gallery.

She ran—she flew down the gallery. She sped her way, panting, through the great hall; rushed through the passages; and when at length she had reached the presence of Lady Arundel, threw herself at the knees of her revered relative.

“Mother! mother!”—for so was the affectionate daughter-in-law accustomed to call her,—“as I looked through the

riel, in the gallery, I saw a troop of horsemen, far, far beyond the north bastion—in that direction ;” and Cecily extended her arm wildly. “ They come ; they come !—Waller’s men ! ”

“ And what then ? ” said Lady Arundel, calmly taking from her forehead her spectacles, and laying aside a book which she was reading. “ We are not unprepared.”

“ — And they never will attack defenceless women and children,” added Blanch, her lute falling from her knee ; yet her colour fading from her cheeks. “ They are Englishmen, Cecily.”

“ Let us not lose time in parley, my girls,” exclaimed Lady Arundel, rising. She rang a little silver bell which stood on the table near her ; a momentary silence ensued. Perhaps that brief pause was not the least agonizing of the many trials which were to be encountered by three lonely females.

“ Michael,” said Lady Arundel, addressing a middle-aged servant, who obeyed her summons, “ send the se-

neschal to me. The sentinels have begun their evening duty, Michael? It is well. And there are men posted, as usual, in the warder's tower? Right. The bastions are manned, and there is no unseemly carousing in the buttery to draw off our servants from their duty?"

"Since my lord left," replied the man, with a reverence that did not deteriorate from the dignity of human nature—for it was respect, not fear; "nought hath been omitted of customary care. Nay, some watch have been added."

"Let them be even doubled this night, then," said Lady Arundel; "and, harkye! Simon will find me in the north gallery. Let him bring one of those newly-fashioned spy-glasses with him; perchance the moon may yet rise through the misty air. Despatch, Michael. And now, Blanch, attend me. Nay, Cecily, must you go too? Well, well, better be altogether—better altogether. Let us be quiet, my children—soon enough to spread a panic when our enemies are at the gate. Hark! the horn!"

As she spoke, a blast, long, loud, echoed through the courts and angles of the castle, dying away only to be renewed—twice, thrice.

“Let us be prepared,” said Lady Arundel, drawing herself up, and uttering a faint sigh as the last notes of the horn ceased,—“for all things that may happen,” she uttered to herself. “There is a stir in the hall,” she observed audibly; “our servants are aroused as well as ourselves. Let them not see us disturbed.”

She turned to her daughter and niece. They drew affectionately near her. Neither spoke: but Cecily pressed her hand to her heart, as if to still the throbbing.

In an instant the castle, heretofore so still, was in commotion. Doors were hurriedly thrown open, servants, usually creeping about in silence, were running here and there—a confusion of tongues prevailed in the hall.

Lady Arundel quitted the apartment in which she had been sitting, and walked forth into the hall. It was dimly illumined by the embers of the great logs,

which had been suffered nearly to die away. The light which they gave showed the magnificence of the vast structure. It gleamed upon implements of warfare, too soon to be of use; upon the hospitable table, set for the accustomed supper meal; it gleamed upon a scene of peace and domestic comfort. For an instant, the contrast, with all that she dreaded, struck upon Lady Arundel's nerves; she rested, for a moment, her arm upon the shoulder of Blanch. Her servants gathered around her. She advanced into the midst of the hall—she was among her people—standing amongst those entrusted to her. The momentary weakness passed away. Her spirit rose; and never, during the momentous events of her subsequent life, was it wholly, or, at least, perceptibly, again subdued.

In a short time the powerful mind acted upon the weak. The multifarious personages who formed the households of nobility, were, at one time, nearly all assembled near their mistress. Gentlemen-ushers, of whom, in those days of

pomp, Lady Arundel had her complement; grooms of the chambers, footmen, porters, cooks, and attendants of every description, all dismayed, for once ventured to rush into the presence of their stately mistress; but, as Lady Arundel advanced, the mob of inferior servants fell back. The chamber-maids, peeping in at the doors or huddled into corners, ceased whispering; the old housekeeper, born upon the estate, wearing her antiquated black hood over her brows, alone considered it becoming to remain near the centre of the hall during the august interview.

Lady Arundel, in front of a small troop of household servants, looked calmly around at all who showed perturbation, or who caused disturbance. In a few moments all voices were hushed.

“Let us await without confusion,” said Lady Arundel, “the return of Michael. He is parleying with the seneschal. We shall shortly hear what these nightly intruders mean by thus disturbing our privacy.”

She looked warily, as she spoke, at the countenances of those upon whom, for life, for protection, she, and the two gentle beings who stood near her, were to depend. There was a group of stout serving-men, whose strong arms and unbroken strength might do some service. True, they bore, at present, no military accoutrements. The blue coats and silver badges by which liveried servants were to be distinguished in the time of the Tudor monarchs, were, in those of the Stuarts, exchanged for cloaks "garded," as it was called, with lace, and all, in the same family, of one colour. In the Arundel family these suits were especially costly; the domestics were chosen men, selected of one height, frequently some of them brothers of one family, "proper men,"—as it was the custom to call them,—goodly to look upon, agile, well-trained, skilful in sports, able to do some good service, should occasion force them to exchange their "garded" coats for suits of mail.

Whilst Lady Arundel, surveying with

a steady eye the small garrison which was her sole dependence, glanced at the leathern jerkins which hung upon the wall, the great door of the hall was slowly opened, and Michael, her gentleman-usher, entered with a low reverence.

"What news, Master Michael, what news?" was whispered by several voices, as the old servant passed gravely through the throng. But Michael spoke not until he arrived near the spot where Lady Arundel stood. He said, in a low voice,

"My lady, a troop of the rebels hath forded the river; they are planted on t'other side of the draw-bridge, their captain, as they call him, one Master Ludlow; their commander, or colonel, as the fellows have it, Sir Edward Hungerford, is marching hither straight from Maiden Bradley."

"And what wills Master Ludlow?" inquired Lady Arundel, in a firm tone, looking at the anxious face of the usher with an encouraging smile. "Speak up, Michael, like a man. I have no secrets here—all are friends."

"The Roundhead seeketh, madam, some Cavaliers; or, as he calleth them, Malig-nants; and demandeth entrance into this castle."

"Tell him he shall have none!" answered Lady Arundel, imperatively; "and bid him retire. I would not set an en-sample of bloodshed, yet make these intruders know that there are guns charged and primed upon the bastions. Hie thee with that message."

"I would fain speak with ye," pursued Lady Arundel, raising her voice as Michael retired, with a low bow. "We are fifty strong—that is, amongst ye men—twenty-five only bred to arms; but all are men, all are Wiltshire men; most of ye, methinks, born on this side of the Nedder. 'Tis not my will, mark ye, to let these rebels ransack this goodly castle—nay, nor so much as set their foot in it. We have arms, lads, here;" and she pointed as she spoke to the ancient and modern implements of war which hung against the walls.

"I promised my lord, ere he went hence," she pursued, raising her voice to

its highest pitch, "that I would defend the castle to the very last ; and so I will. See that ye do your duty, and let your watchword be, Blanch Arundel of Wardour !—"

A murmur then arose in that vast hall, —a murmur, not of discontent and repugnance, but of joy, at the determined spirit of the lady of the castle. Quickly, even in the presence of their mistress, were the costly suits thrown off, and, piled in one heap, were committed by the steward of the household into a deep iron chest ; quickly were the leathern jerkins assumed, arms selected, matchlocks tried, even the ancient cross-bow drawn out from its dusty retreat ;—halberds were brandished, and the smell of ammunition filled the hall.

Whilst her vassals were thus busily employed, the two boys, wakened from their slumbers, were hastily dressed, and brought for security into the hall, by command of Lady Cecily, who had retired, during the confusion, to their chamber. Blanch had not been idle ; adored by the household, her voice had stimulated their

preparations; even her hands had aided their exertions. She flew from corner to corner, recommending each person to the accoutrement most suitable to his strength and size, cheering the women, inciting the men, and all without losing, for one instant, the attributes of a gentle nature, or forfeiting the dignity becoming her station.

“And which of you,” said Lady Arundel, looking round at the busy crew, “volunteers a service of danger—to escape, disguised, to Salisbury, there to despatch trusty messengers to my lord; for we must seek aid, and ward off the foe until succour arrives;—say, who goes with these hasty lines which I have scrawled?”

“I, an’ please your ladyship!” exclaimed a youth of seventeen, dressed in a page’s wonted attire, and sinking down at Lady Arundel’s feet.

“Thou, Walter! See, Blanch, thy foster-brother hath thy spirit; yet, boy, ’twere better some elder messenger went forth; thy youth, and thy father’s old age—”

“—Are no lets to my going,” interposed Walter, with great humility. “Give me but a good steed, madam—I know every by-path of the hills,—I know every sheep-walk on the downs.”

“—And if his youth be an impediment,” cried Blanch, “’twould be better that he go, and leave more manly servants here.”

“True,” returned Lady Arundel, thoughtfully. “Go,” she added, in a hurried tone; “return, to cheer us, if thou canst;—if not, let poor old Michael remember that his son perished to save Wardour.”

“The boy hath been born and nurtured under our very roof,” she muttered to Blanch, as, receiving a billet from her hands, the youth, with a low bow, disappeared.

“He must creep out in the darkness,” observed Blanch, looking up at the arched and groined windows, through which the clear and calm stars were seen. “Holy Mary! let not the moon arise just yet. But, lo! Michael, from his parley with the rebels.”

“ — On your ladyship’s refusal to allow an entrance,” said Michael, in a measured phrase, “ Master Ludlow boldly, and at once, caused it to be made known unto us, that he would forthwith storm the castle. He gives your ladyship until to-morrow to muse upon this message, and hath, for the meantime, retired. Their force at Bradley,” he added, in a lower tone, “ is fifteen hundred strong.”

His words produced no change on the countenance of Lady Arundel. She calmly replied, “ My answer on the morrow will be in one word—defiance !” She pointed to the massive and celebrated chimney-piece as she spoke. “ My servants who cannot read,” she said aloud, “ know that that carved scroll contains this motto :” she raised her white hand to a beautiful picture of the Virgin, which hung high over the gorgeous carved work: “ ‘ Under thy protection,’ ” thus read Lady Arundel, in a high tone, “ ‘ may our name and race be upheld !’ — And now to supper. Michael,” she whispered, “ see that no wonted observance be omitted,

the usual grace be sung,—no signs of fear or haste,—and bid the seneschal, and the serjeant of my honest men-at-arms, attend me in the paneled chamber.”

As she withdrew, the sight of Cecily holding in her hand her youngest child, arrested, for an instant, the steps of Lady Arundel. She was directed by the fond mother to notice the spirited Everard, who, busy with guns and arquebusses, had now entirely thrown off his slumbers, and was covering himself with a huge helmet which came down over his eyes, arming himself with a shield that concealed his figure, and brandishing a sword at arm's length.

“Let the suit his father wore at his age, be searched for and found,” cried Lady Arundel, aware how the affection of her old servants would be stimulated even by the child's sympathy with their cause.

“Go to rest—little man,” she added, patting the head of Claude. “Cecily, take rest; we admit you not into our conference. Blanch—”

“—I shall not leave you, madam,” was

the young girl's prompt reply, and she followed Lady Arundel into the paneled chamber, where, all the live-long night, the high-spirited lady held conference with her seneschal, and the commander of her slender garrison who — it may now be stated, although it were then a sin to permit the truth to be known, — amounted to no more than five-and-twenty men !

Morning slowly dawned upon the paneled parlour, ere Lady Arundel had received all the reports from the seven different watch-towers of Wardour ; — ere she had dismissed all her messengers to the Barbican tower ; — ere she had marshaled her domestic forces, and arranged the duties of each servant. The zeal, devotion, and disinterestedness with which her dependants entered upon the defence of the castle, had often well-nigh brought tears into her eyes ; but she checked every demonstration of weakness, and calmly considered her resources ; as calmly, as if their strength, or failure, did not involve existence.

The castle—thus under the sole guidance of an aged woman—called by the antiquary, Camden, “a pretty castle,” was of hexagonal form, with six great towers—one at each corner. It was seated, as well as the more modern structure erected after its ruin, to the south of Warminster, in the midst of those downs, or plains, then so thinly inhabited as to be infested by robbers, and, consequently, of bad repute. The downs, to the south, were watered by the river Nedder, or Nadder, or Adder—so called from its creeping, and, sometimes, underground course; and, on the southern side of this stream, tributary to the Avon, rose the proud towers of Wardour.

Cultivation had surrounded its frowning turrets with trees; wealth and care had planted parks, and stocked them with the red-deer; preserves for fish were scattered about the domain. Much had been done for pleasure—much more for use. But one vital defect in the situation had been remedied at much expense, but with little skill. The castle had no well. It was

true that the rich possessors of Wardour had contrived to bring the water from a distance of two miles by a conduit of lead; the artifice had served passably well in times of peace. It never occurred to the great Earl of Arundel that there would come times when his contrivance would, at the greatest emergency, and when life hung upon its continuance,—at the last crisis,—lamentably fail.

Depending upon a vast tank for this vital necessary, the castle was, in all other respects, admirably adapted for defence. A road was cut through the terrace by the hill to the grand entrance. This was defended by a Barbican, flanked with towers, and guarded with strong portcullises. Like most Norman castles, the fortifications consisted of mounds, and moats, with walls on the mounds fortified with battlements. The walls were further strengthened by small projecting towers, called bastions, and platforms were made behind the parapets.

Near the centre of the castle was the keep, in this case a detached building,

containing the munition and stores for the garrison, which were conveyed to the upper stories of the keep by means of a square passage, or funnel, within the south wall. A light gallery ran round the keep, which stood at some distance, opposite to the state apartments of the castle. Below were profound dungeons, — closed since the feudal times, but now, carefully inspected by order of the Lady Arundel. The apertures in the keep were very small, and, had it not been for the gallery which was constructed round every story, the soldiery would have been—save by torchlight—almost wholly in darkness.

The main body of the castle had been built to correspond with the plan adopted in its outworks. Seven great turrets at its angles and sides, gave it not only an imposing appearance, but greater strength, for there two of its walls were strongly fortified. Lonely, among the plains, ruined towers may yet be discerned, recalling hours of dismay, years, perhaps, of untold remorse, by which that era of turbulence was rendered memorable. A

signal instance of the miseries of civil war is noted in the annals of Wardour.

The sun rose in splendour;—the Nether sparkled in its course, beneath the beams of day; the butterfly was abroad early, reveling in the gay spring-flowers; the gilded fanes upon the clock-tower of old Wardour were scarcely moved, for the morning breeze was mild, and even the shivering alders which grew on the river's brink were, on this bright May morning, at rest. But bird and beast were scared from their wonted haunts by sights and sounds at which even their instinct took affright. The red-deer, in the parks, were huddled together beneath the trees; the sheep on the downs stood still and stupid, close compacted, like minute dots upon the green-sward; the horses which sported free in the meadows were galloping wildly, as with fear; even the little birds flew to serener air; whilst a large colony of rooks, long tenanted in a grove of firs, and usually so busy and so noisy at the hour of dawn, quitted in haste their nests, flying in dark compa-

nies, descending now here, now there, as if for experiment of safety, yet, ever and anon, retreating to some convenient height, whence, in security, they, at least, might view the destruction of that ancient tenement to which they were vassals.

Upon the hill,—even along the smooth-shaven terrace, whereon Cecily, and her boys, had so lately walked, within musket-shot of the castle — were planted guns and cannons pointed towards the castle. The well-appointed troops who manned the artillery; the commander who led them; the corps by which they were flanked, paused in solemn silence, ere the work of destruction was begun. Then, by a grave person in authority, by one who wore the garb of a Christian minister, was a prayer lifted up to the God of Hosts, that the righteous cause might prosper, the sinning be cut off, root and branch, the cause of religion triumph.

Each man—even the meanest soldier—covered his face as this solemn address,

uttered in a loud voice, was sent up by the preacher.

A moment of deep silence ensued. Then the awful, repeated sounds of the heavy artillery were heard, battering the sides of the Barbican; a dense smoke ascended to the blue calm sky; all animate beings within sight or hearing fled away, nought but the fierce combatants were heard; nought but the strong battlements of lonely Wardour were seen.

Within that solitary castle, along the gallery where, in courtly times, princes had walked, where a happy domestic family had held fond converse, guns were planted, and a few eager, devoted servants took their station. The Lady Arundel passed from window to window, commending the zeal of those who thus obeyed her behest; she was succeeded by Cecily, timid and shrinking at first, but now—now that the combat had begun, determined, fearless, heroic. Whilst Lady Cecily brought, as the hours passed on, refreshment to the men-at-arms, and with her own hands proffered them the beaker,

Blanch, also busily engrossed with similar cares, met her cousin. For an instant they were clasped in each other's arms; then they tore themselves away, as those who might not meet again, but to whom life is nothing, compared with the safety of those for whose sake Cecily would have dared the wild tenants of the African forest: or Blanch — what the cousins almost equally dreaded, the unlicensed soldiery of a rebel army—to defend.

All the day—that blessed and beautiful day—the cannonade was mercilessly continued;—in vain! The strong walls of old Wardour stood invincible. Some of the outworks were, indeed, partially broken down, but the undaunted continual firing from the keep and Barbican prevented the enemy from entering. No matter; night came on; and, whilst the moon shone on the battlements, the sound of musket-shots were heard; nor, till an hour or two of gloom after midnight rendered attack impossible, was the dread cannonading perceived, for a time, to cease.

Thus passed the first day of the siege;

another and another day succeeded, and still no further progress was made by Colonel Hungerford than to gain several of the bastions and to subdue the Barbican. The keep was still invincible, when, after a night of heavy and unremitting cannonade, the morning of the fourth day arose.

CHAPTER IV.

Kent. Who's there, besides foul weather ?

Genl. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

• • • • •

Alas ! sir, are you here ? things that love night

Love not such nights as these : the wrathful skies

Gallow the very wanderers of the dark

And make them keep their caves : since I was man

Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,

Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never

Remember to have heard.

King Lear.

WITHIN the library of the castle Blanch supported Lady Cecily, fainting. A ball had touched the sleeve of little Claude ; the child was not hurt, but the mother's fears had magnified the danger.

She was recovering when Blanch, kissing her forehead, said, " I must leave you to Margery ; they are bringing another poor wretch into the hall ; there are no bandages for them there, and I must go.

Dear, dear Cecily, look up; all is not lost !”

She ran away, almost while speaking. “ Margery,” said Cecily, as her cousin left her, “ I am very faint and very foolish ; but I am better, and I mean, I hope, to be more true to myself, more worthy of him whose name I bear.” She paused for a moment, then, walking towards a sofa, stood looking on her youngest boy, who, wearied and alarmed, had fallen asleep. His mother could not trust him out of her sight, so he was there.

“ My aunt’s hopes are high, so, also, my cousin’s ; but I know, Margery, that we cannot hold out long ; our expected aid has failed. Margery, should the castle surrender, we Arundels shall all be the chief victims of the rebel fury. I, in particular, for I am the mother, and wife of—” She paused, and her eyes rested on a noble picture of her gallant husband. “—Whatever happens to me, Margery, whether my weak spirit sink in the midst of these terrors, and I die, thou wilt restore my children to their father ; thou

wilt tell him that I bore all for his honour—that it should never be said that the house of the Arundels yielded without a struggle. Oh, Margery! thou, who hast reared me, knowest that he was my first and only love; let him not forget me! let him not, if I am slain, or die heart-broken,—separated,—ever learn to love another bride!—I cannot bear the thought! But I must to my duties. Are not these *his* walls? our poor failing servants *his*?”

She kissed passionately the cheek of her sleeping child. A few minutes afterwards, Cecily was seen carrying, with her own fair hands, supplies of ammunition to the soldiers; food to the weary; medicines to the wounded; joining with Blanch in all those duties which are usually imposed on women of meaner condition, but which in this emergency devolved upon these delicately-nurtured women.

The enemy, finding their musketry ineffectual, and perceiving that a very slender force, animated by fervent zeal, would yet be able to hold out the castle for some days longer, bethought themselves

on the fourth day of the siege, of another expedient. They resolved to spring a mine under the castle, and to blow it up.

Evening drew on; the spirits of the besieged were elated by the little progress which Sir Edward Hungerford's artillery had been able to make on their stronghold. The commander of Lady Arundel's slender garrison was a veteran non-commissioned officer, taken into the service of Lord Arundel on account of his having served under that nobleman's father. During his youth, honest Ralph, or, as he was called by many, Captain Ralph, had fought out the period of his apprenticeship to glory in the Netherlands, and he had seen the plan contrived by Carnot to counteract the skilful inventions of Vauban, by which, in sieges, all the advantage was given to besiegers, and to restore the balance between the attack and the defence of fortresses.

Occasional sorties from the sallying ports, with frequent discharges of stones and balls from mortars, fired from angles of considerable elevation, annoyed the

assailants in their trenches; putting their men *hors de combat*, and obliging them to devise some method of concealing their approaches; and the mortars with which Wardour Castle was furnished, though clumsy and ill-contrived—for they were not much more modern than the period of Henry the Eighth, by whom they were introduced—were thus rendered fatally effective.

About sunset, the firing from the Roundheads partially ceased. The women-servants in the castle, who had all day long been aiding the men, carrying them supplies of ammunition, and extinguishing the fiery missiles which were thrown in by the enemy's artillery, had now time, wearied as they were, to attend to the wounded.

The hall was a scene of mournful confusion: here lay a fine youth, just brought in from one of the outworks;—he was a minstrel; his father had held the office before him; but when the besiegers came, he had donned his leathern jerkin, like the rest, and had taken up arms. He

was a fair boy, whose tuneful voice had often made that old hall, in which he now lay expiring, ring with plaudits. Hushed are for ever the warbling notes of his rich and plaintive voice. The priest is by his side, whispering, in low accents, words of comfort. Old man, cease thy holy efforts ! —The youth is at rest.

Broken down, mangled, crippled for ever, the stout-hearted Michael—he whose very existence is bound up in that of the castle, of which he is a portion, lies along another bench, fain to rest his head upon the knee of a young serving-maid, his daughter. Blanch is by his side ; Cecily is stanching the blood from his arm ; the castle leech is hurrying to him ; but never more shall Michael walk abroad ; the fresh air shall never more refresh his brow ; weak as an infant, bedridden, wrung with frequent pain, never shall the faithful servant again know health nor joy.

Lady Arundel, passing through the hall, spoke words of comfort and commendation to the wounded man ; they were answered,

with an earnest entreaty that she would not surrender yet.

"For," gasped the sufferer, "we cannot go back. We must,"—and his eye glistened as he spoke,—"hold by my lord's honour whilst a single tower remains. Has my boy been heard of?" added the old man, looking eagerly around him. "Another day, and we may have succour." Lady Arundel turned away. *She* knew what to few was confided—that her messenger never would, never could come back; that the body of the adventurous boy had been found in the moat, thrown in, covered with wounds, by some of the enemy.

She hesitated for a moment; then, looking up, said, "God is our aid!" and, moving across the hall, repaired to an inner apartment.

Lady Arundel's appearance denoted all that she had suffered. For four nights she had not lain down to rest. Her face was pale and care-worn, her figure drooping, her voice tremulous. She knew that the crisis of events had arrived; that she

must either surrender at such a disadvantage as to see most of her brave servants put ignominiously to death, or hold out until every avenue to the castle was in the possession of the besiegers. With none to advise her, surrounded only by those who depended upon the strength of her character, she formed her own resolutions.

The room to which she had withdrawn, for a few moments of quiet, was a small oratory. Lady Arundel was followed by a female attendant.

"Send for my children *here*," she exclaimed, after kneeling for some moments in prayer before a crucifix—"all."

In a few minutes those whom she thus summoned were standing around her. All were dishevelled and exhausted, yet not hopeless. The sanguine spirit of Blanch rose upon the cessation of the dreaded musquetry.

"We have repelled them; they *cannot* take Wardour; let us but have two days longer, and our home is safe." She clasped her hands in ecstasy as she spoke.

Cecily was silent. Her cheek was cold and pale as monumental marble; her eye was bent on the ground; her head drooped; and when her boys, who came in with her, pulled her robe, and asked her some questions, she answered not.

"Our time is brief," said Lady Arundel, "let us not consume it in idle talk. We have, of late, been sadly disturbed in our wonted observances; my children, let us once more pray together."

She threw herself upon her knees. Blanch followed her example; and Cecily, drawing her children to her, knelt also, envying, as she looked at their clear, fresh countenances, their happy unconsciousness.

Ere the voices of the little company of Christians were upraised in prayer,—whilst Cecily still looked upon the calm brows of her sons,—a low, sullen, heavy sound, like subterranean thunder, ran underneath, through the floor of the apartment. It came rumbling and growling, as if the caverns of the deep were opened, and mighty winds rushed into the unfathom-

able space. It came and went ; shaking the very walls of the strong castle, causing the massive floor to tremble under the kneeling family. It died away, groaning, to utter silence. Then, ere the throbbing hearts of those who heard it were stilled, ere the question was mutually asked, the inquiring look exchanged, a crash, such as of falling rocks, loud, continued, appalling, was heard at a greater distance. It was like the thunderbolt tenfold repeated ; it broke upon the ear, shaking even the stoutest frames beneath the roof of Wardour Castle, until they seemed paralysed ;—rousing the dying, stunning even the deaf ;—and then all was still. Not a sound, not the whisper of a gale, was heard for the space of ten minutes or more.

But, presently, distant shrieks, wailings, shouts of exultation, howlings of despair, succeeded the awful silence. The terror-stricken inmates of Wardour looked wildly at each other.

“They are coming ! they are here !” screamed Cecily, drawing her boys to her side.

"Cecily," cried Blanch, throwing herself before the children; "if they hurt any one, let me be the first. I have no parents, you know."

"Be composed," said Lady Arundel; "the rebels cannot, they dare not, storm the Castle without first offering terms. Stuart," she continued, addressing a soldier who ran breathlessly towards her; "what has been the crash?"

"The rebels, madam, have sprung a mine. The outworks are mostly destroyed; but, thanks to the Virgin, our donjon is still secure. I am sent to offer terms to your ladyship. 'Bid my Lady of Arundel,' such is the message of their insolence, 'take warning. We offer her, and all the female prisoners in the castle, life, if the fortress is now surrendered. If not'—the mine they sprung to-night was introduced, they say, underneath the underground passages, leading to the state apartments—'to-morrow we shall be less merciful, and the pride of Wardour will be leveled to the dust.'"

"And my lord's officers, and my brave

soldiers, will they give them quarter?" asked Lady Arundel, looking at Stuart.

"Madam," returned the soldier; "there is no promise offered for *them*. But heed not that; let them defend themselves. I speak for all. Save your honoured life, save the Lady Cecily; and—"

"No, Stuart, no!" interrupted Lady Arundel, hastily; "never will we, nor Wardour, be saved by a dishonourable action. I will not desert my garrison. Tell them *that*. With respect to the black deed, and blacker purpose of to-night, if they chose to do the work of destruction; if they mean to undermine our dwelling house, and bury our mangled limbs beneath its ruins, they may—they can do it. But all England," she added solemnly, "will cry out shame upon them; they will be hunted like fiends, we—we," she continued, quickly turning to her relatives, "we shall perish together, my poor girls! Yet fear not; 'tis but to prove us. Go thy way, Stuart, and tell the rebel captain to remember, that the Hungerfords of Hache have the honour

to be cousins, in the third degree, to the Arundels of Wardour; I pray him some courtesy;—for we must not,” she paused again, addressing Cecily, “tempt our destiny.”

Stuart retired. No further proposals were made that night; and that night—that night of dread—no eye was closed; no, not of the weariest, nor of the most aged in Wardour. Some envied the calm dead, who, hastily conveyed to remote apartments, had heard not the crash. Some hoped, none despaired; for strong determination possessed every breast; and mercifully a temporary excitement was lent. Men’s minds became accustomed to the proximate evil; they were at the crisis of a desperate game, the stakes were—fate.

Busy, indefatigable all the night, morning came on the ladies of Arundel un-awares. The earliest news were that the enemy had applied petards to a gate which led direct to the entrance of the castle; the portcullises were destroyed; the inner court would soon be gained.

But the energies of the besieged rose at the last. They concentrated their strength, they concerted with admirable skill their operations. The bodies of the besiegers lay thick in the entrance of the court, and a check was again given to their progress.

Sir Edward Hungerford was an obdurate, prejudiced, wrong-headed man, who esteemed mercy a blemish to honour, and whose hard heart had never known a sentiment of pity. He dared not, however, so general was the popularity of Lady Arundel—he dared not put his threat into execution. The virtues of Blanch of Arundel, more effectually even than her courage, saved her family and garrison from that mode of destruction, which their valiant resistance had seemed to Colonel Hungerford to render the only effectual mode. There is no doubt but that he seriously contemplated introducing a mine, so as to explode, and level the castle, and bury its inhabitants in one common grave. History has wronged

this officer, if such were not his purpose ; the chronicles of his time have done his name grievous injury if such were not the case. The blameless character of three women ; their-well known virtues ; the love of the poor ; the pity of those whom they had pitied, saved Hungerford from this one deadly crime. Alas ! he did enough to brand his memory with cruelty and dishonour !

The noon of the fifth day arrived. It found Lady Arundel dejected, embarrassed. By this time the eastern angle of the fortifications was, it was thought, likely to be set on fire, from the number of red hot missiles continually thrown by the enemy in that direction. It is true, that the conflagration was far from the private apartments, and not near the invincible keep ; but it was near enough for water, which was conveyed into the great tank, to have stayed the progress of the fire. The tank was supplied, be it remembered, by a conduit from two miles' distance. Lady Arundel commanded her servants--

the few who were unemployed—to be ready, in case of combustion, to check its progress by a supply of water; but complicated misfortunes bore down the fated inhabitants of the castle. The conduit which supplied the reservoir, it was now found, had been cut off by the rebels; the tank was low, and shortly—very shortly—even if the garrison were not put to the sword, or killed by explosion, they must have died by thirst.

The firing of the enemy had now, for many hours, ceased; doubtless, it was guessed by the besiegers, that their prey must, by this time, have become aware that resistance was hopeless. The recent events of the civil war, the desecration of many noble structures, had brought such a degree of odium on the cause of the Parliament, that Colonel Hungerford was not desirous of confirming so unfavourable an impression by any excesses at Wardour. He, therefore, early in the afternoon, agreed to a request for a personal interview, proffered by Lady Arundel—pleading the ancient relationship to which she

had referred as a claim for courtesy, and a guarantee for honour.

The boon which Lady Arundel claimed, in terms of respect, was granted; and, exhausted by intense anxiety and fatigue, she prepared to receive Sir Edward. The hall was cleared; the household servants reassumed their liveries; the female attendants were ranged in due order, and the ladies of the family carefully attired—for it was Lady Arundel's pleasure that all should be seemly upon the entrance of the stranger—prepared to receive Colonel Hungerford.

“My children,” said the venerable lady, addressing Cecily and Blanch, “our hour of trial is now arrived: I have foreseen it: yes, I knew that when Sir Edward Hungerford planted his battery on yonder terrace we had but faint hopes of aid from without. But I had promised my lord, that our ancient fortress should not be yielded without a struggle. The struggle has been made—the conflict is over—that we must submit, is manifest.”

She paused for an instant, and then

resumed her discourse. "Had we yielded at first, my poor, brave servants would have been put to the sword—our resistance will procure us terms. Let us hope! Oh, how wonderfully have our lives been spared! In the midst of dangers, we have been unharmed! And now, my Cecily—now, Blanch, let us show our gratitude by our resignation."

"They will not part us?" asked Blanch, clinging to Lady Arundel. The poor girl had never, hitherto, shown, for an instant, depression or fear—yet now the tears fell fast.

"I will not allow them—not if any concession of property can avail," returned Lady Arundel. "Let us not think upon the future, but provide for present safety," she added, after a moment's reflection, as if to escape inquiry. "Cecily, I apprehend that all—even Everard and Claude—God in heaven bless them!—must proceed to the hall. Our colonel, as he is entitled, though God forbid that we should ever give him that name!—will expect to see all his prisoners."

"I will attend you," replied Lady Cecily, whilst her pale, fair cheek looked whiter than ever. "Everard, be near me—close to me; Claude, do not let loose my hand," added the trembling mother, holding her children with a tenacious grasp.

"I have here," said Lady Arundel, unfolding a scroll of paper, "the conditions which Sir Edward has sent, of our surrender. It is upon such terms alone that I can or will meet him. The men as well as women in the fortress are to be safe—that we owe to the stout maintenance of our unconquered keep. We, my poor children, must proceed, under their guard, to Salisbury; but I have such reliance on our gracious Sovereign—on the influence of those, Cecily, who, far away, know not what we suffer, that I am confident exchanges will be procured; at all events, let us not droop."

"And the castle—these dear, dear walls, will they be spared?" asked Blanch, looking around at the rich tapestries, the

costly garniture of the room in which this hurried conversation was held.

“All,” replied Lady Arundel, “upon the honour of—I hope not a broken reed—the parliamentary commander.” She looked down, and silently wiped a tear from her eye. “We may not, I fear, hope ever to return—to see what damage they will do. For me, it is of little consequence; Cecily, you will tell your boys what hath been.” And Lady Arundel gazed around her mournfully, yet proudly.

“Whilst you, my mother, sustain yourself so nobly, shall *we* give way to grief?” was Lady Cecily’s reply.

At this instant hurried footsteps were heard in the adjacent room. The castle for some hours so still, was in a state of tumult. Rough voices were heard, doors were flung to, a heavy tread resounded through the passages;—the doors of the room were thrown suddenly open, faces peeped in, and then retreated—faces new and strange to the alarmed females upon whom fierce glances glared; heads with short-cropped locks, small collars

but ruffian, unsoldierly demeanour—unlike that of regular troops.

“This is somewhat uncourteous,” exclaimed Lady Arundel, alarmed; “where are my servants?”

“Safe, mistress, in the hall! and walk thither with these damsels!” replied a man with a halberd, who seemed to be one in authority. “Colonel Hungerford has ordered prayers there, anon; but he will dispose of the prisoners first. Move on, there!”

“Insult her at your peril!” cried Blanch, with the fury of a lioness. “Sir,” she added, addressing an officer, who suddenly burst into the room from another door, “I appeal to you, who have some slight token of the soldier in your bearing, is Lady Arundel to endure insolence?”

The person to whom Blanch addressed this expostulation, started back, exclaiming, “No, indeed!—such is not the wish of Colonel Hungerford. Sergeant Markham! see to it! Let not a finger be laid on any article of furniture, here or elsewhere!” added the officer imperiously, and with a sudden elevation of voice.

“Madam !” he said, in a softened tone, and with all the grace of a Cavalier, “will you trust an enemy to conduct you in safety to the grand hall ?”

Lady Arundel bowed courteously ; but she refused the hand respectfully held out to aid her progress. Certain emotions almost choked her utterance : she managed, however, to say, “I know the way, sir, perhaps better than you may do ; I will merely keep these men at a distance. I trust in Sir Edward’s honour to enforce that no injury be done.”

The unknown officer coloured, and looked anxiously around him ; for, alas ! the work of devastation was already commenced, and as the ladies, attended by their silent companion, gained the hall, a shout of exultation reached their ears ;—the oratory was desecrated. With fanatical fury, the crucifix was pulled down—the painted glass windows were broken to pieces—the missals, many of them of rare value, were thrown into the fire. Lady Arundel knew not the precise cause of those yells and

cries. Heart-sick, she sank upon a seat in the hall: at this moment, she could have prayed for death; but she exchanged the secret petition which she proffered, into one for patience. At the upper end of the hall, even upon the dais, knelt a group of men in regimentals around the table, or orsille, usually appropriated to meals. Their close-cut hair—in some instances, shaven—very plain attire, and the groaning amens with which their devotions were seasoned, sufficiently marked them for a group of—what Lady Arundel dared not for worlds, at that moment, have called them—Roundheads.

They finished; and a person, in a black suit, single-breasted, with Geneva bands, and a voice of dolorous sound, proceeded to say grace. They were about to make merry—if merry they could ever possibly be—upon Lady Arundel's own fare, unasked, in her presence.

Ere they proceeded, however, to these carnal purposes, Sir Edward Hungerford,—who had, in thus taking possession of the

Castle, violated already one article of his terms, namely, that it should be surrendered to him,—came forward into the hall, followed by his aide-de-camp and secretary, Captain Ludlow. The appearance of these two men was so unlike to anything that had ever been seen in that hall before, that, alarmed and pre-occupied as the ladies of Arundel were, they could not help gazing with no small curiosity upon these singular personages.

Sir Edward Hungerford had all the outward attributes of good birth and good breeding. He was one of those men who, from disappointed hopes and a succession of family misfortunes, had embraced that cause in which the greatest portion of grumbling might be decorously vented. His principle was, that all established things are wrong and must be amended; and hence he was allured by the professedly visionary schemes of the Fifth Monarchymen. His gloomy nature was attracted by the wild mixture of fierceness and devotion in the precepts and practice of his associates;—his cupidity—for, of that

passion he was the slave—was gratified by the present prospects of plunder and of aggrandisement, which the progress of those who were interested in destroying all that could support aristocracy, presented.

Sir Edward had no affection for royalty. One of his ancestors had suffered in the reign of Henry the Eighth; the family had, from that time, been declining, and the main line, with all its honours, had become extinct. It was in vain that Sir Edward sought to console himself with the fact, that a member of his family had for the first time held the office of Speaker to the House of Commons, in the reign of Edward the Third; the barony was lost; and he, a simple knight, had been deprived of the family estates of Heytesbury, in the county of Wiltshire. An early invincible jealousy of those who were esteemed more fortunate, had an unhappy influence over Sir Edward's mind; and an alliance, some centuries back, with the house of Arundel and the Lords of Hungerford, far from disarming him of rancour towards the

inhabitants of Wardour, irritated those festering wounds which mortified pride inflicts upon itself; and the man who for ever had the words "patriotism" and "liberty" on his lips, was stimulated by a narrow envy of the greatness and estimation of others.

The operation of these sentiments was not likely to produce generous—not even honourable, deeds. In many of those whose cold exterior disgusts and repels an ardent nature, there is some redeeming principle of sincerity, some strong and firm notions of integrity on which we trust, and safely trust. But Hungerford was rapacious, as well as cold,—a casuist in morality, who would bend all principles to his use,—one who despised that nice and elevated sense of virtue which we call honour. He was an enthusiast in nothing but in hatred and in gain.

The qualities here too faithfully described, were written on Sir Edward's countenance. It was dark, almost olive, in hue; with grey eyes, scarcely ever

raised to those of the person whom he addressed; black, wiry, close-cut hair: a figure tall, martial, redeemed the Parliament officer from the epithet of common-place. In his features might be read the expression of an able, but perverted mind; in his demeanour, the military bearing of a gentleman.

Captain Ludlow, who stood reverently on one side of the Colonel, was of a spare, active form, with a keen eye, a mouth determined and compressed, a deportment, nevertheless, vulgar and abject. He was one of those self-raised men, powerful in intellect, supple in temper, whom Cromwell had the discernment to elevate to importance. To his superiors, subservient beyond conception, the aide-de-camp knew well how to change submission into tyranny when his day of rule prevailed. Both these gentlemen were attired after the fashion of the Roundheads, plain as the regimentals which they wore could permit; with this difference between them, that Sir Edward Hungerford wore a

round hat, which, in compliance with the notions of which well-bred men cannot divest themselves, he did, in truth, lay aside, when he perceived Lady Arundel.

CHAPTER V.

O how feeble is man's power,
That if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another houre,
Nor a lost hour recall !

But come bad chance,
And wee joyne to it our strength,
And wee teach it art and length,
Itself or us to advance.

DR. DONNE.

LADY ARUNDEL rose when Sir Edward Hungerford approached the place where she sat. She looked mournfully around her, ere she spoke. Her dejected household were collected at one end of the hall ; some with bandaged limbs, some with bruises on their faces—all dispirited, and worn out with many nights' service. These were, however, unbound, but they might almost as well have been fettered, so deep was the expression of despondency and humiliation on every countenance.

“ I am surprised,” said Lady Arundel, after curtseying formally in return to Sir Edward’s low bow, (gentlemen bowed first in those days,) “ at the audacity of your men ; surely it can never be by your permission, that they invade my solitude, injure my poor furniture, rush into the chamber of prayer, wherein even my servants have never dared unasked to intrude ? ” She unrolled the paper of capitulation, to which her signature, and that of Colonel Hungerford, had been affixed. “ These are our conditions, Sir Edward : ‘ Safe-conduct to Lady Arundel, her daughter-in-law, and niece ; protection to the city of Bath ; life to be spared to every individual, male or female, in the Lady Arundel’s service (that is, in my Lord’s) ; the wearing-apparel, jewels, *et cetera*, of the said Lady Arundel and her family to be spared ; nought to be taken or touched of the goods or stuff appertaining to the castle, but an inventory to be taken of the same, until the pleasure of Parliament respecting them shall be known.’ ” Lady

Arundel sighed deeply as she read these last words: “‘And, finally, the Lady Arundel, her daughter, and family, to have all things allowed them befitting their rank and sex.’” She folded the paper as she concluded, and looked full into the face of Sir Edward Hungerford, as much as to say, “How have these terms been complied with?”

Sir Edward answered that mute question: “Life has been spared;” he pointed to the disarmed band of valiant servants; “quarter has been given, when asked;—with respect to some disorders among my men, I cannot be answerable for the unruly deeds done by sinners like myself. We are all carnal-minded, disobedient children!” He raised his eyes piously as he spoke.

A solemn silence prevailed for some moments. Lady Arundel’s stedfast gaze was not withdrawn from Colonel Hungerford’s countenance, when he again began to speak. There was an elevation in her manner, devoid of every harsh or masculine expression.

“ With respect to your ladyship’s oratory, I am sorry that any violence should be offered to your superstitions. Let me counsel you, Madam, to get rid of such as soon as possible; and then, the damnable doctrines for which your house is judged and visited, will not interfere with your happiness. Here is my pious chaplain, Robert Freeman, who will be happy, during the progress of your imprisonment, to give you spiritual help;—Master Freeman, you will comfort these benighted souls?”

“ Wait, reverend Sir,” cried Lady Arundel, still with courtesy, but waving her hand, as if to ward off the proposed introduction, “ until we require your aid. You used the word ‘imprisonment,’ Sir Edward; I go again to the terms, and say—” her hands now trembled as she unfolded the paper.

“ When we arrive at Bristol,” returned Colonel Hungerford, abruptly, “ the pleasure of Parliament—”

“ At Bristol!” exclaimed Blanch Somerset, coming hastily forward, “ where

the plague rages ! and, worse than plague, a fierce, uncontrolled successful band of rebel troops—" She stopped short, for a dry, sarcastic laugh from Colonel Hungerford, echoed by Captain Ludlow, startled her. She would almost as soon have expected to see the figure of Saint Nicholas moved with laughter, as the stiff, wooden, ramrod person of Sir Edward Hungerford.

"If we are taken to Bristol," said Lady Arundel firmly, "it must be by force ; I know too well my duty to those who are under my protection—to my son's wife—my son's children—" she added, looking at Cecily, who stood near with Everard and Claude, "to rush, as it were, into the lion's den." There was a short parley between Colonel Hungerford and his aide-de-camp. Their eyes were once or twice directed to the two boys.

"I find no mention made of these young members of your ladyship's family in the terms," said Captain Ludlow, coming forward, with a paper in his hands.

"They are, nevertheless, my grand-

sons," returned Lady Arundel, in some confusion.

"They cannot, however, benefit by the articles of capitulation," said Colonel Hungerford, in a tone of derision; "and are, therefore, prisoners of war. Captain Ludlow, you will see that these youths be conveyed to Dorchester. Their convoy can set forth to-night."

As he spoke, Captain Ludlow, obedient to orders, advanced to the spot where Lady Cecily stood. Her eyes were fixed upon him with a wild stare; her blanched lips moved not; but she firmly held her children to her. Captain Ludlow, as he walked towards the unhappy mother, made a signal to a small party of armed soldiers, who came from a remote part of the hall. As the unhappy mother perceived them, she uttered a shriek, so loud and piercing that even Captain Ludlow, well proved in scenes of misery, drew back; and the armed men stood still.

At this instant, Blanch rushed forward; she threw herself on her knees before Sir Edward. Her innocence and

youth attracted the compassion of some who looked on this sad scene, while she folded her hands in the attitude of one who prays for some dear boon.

“Is it as hostages, Sir Edward Hungerford, that you mean to take my little cousins from us? Is it that a ransom may be given—better conditions entertained?” She paused; there was no reply for a moment—for a moment only Colonel Hungerford hesitated. “Then take *me*; I am allied to this house; I am a Somerset; they, whom you would crush, love me well. Indeed, indeed, when my uncle Worcester knows it, he will pay a heavy ransom for me. What!” she resumed, breathless and earnest, but with a mixture of indignation in her tone, “will you tear the children from their mother? will you separate her who hath never before been parted from them? Will you be a fiend—a thing for all good men to hate—to—” her highly-wrought feelings could no longer vent themselves in words; and a hysterical sob succeeded her passionate language.

She was still on her knees, when a kind hand raised her up, and a kind voice whispered to her, "Fear not; if they go, they shall be safe!" She turned and saw the officer who had protected them before.

"I am acting," said Sir Edward Hungerford, after a transient embarrassment, "for the Parliament. Heresy and idolatry must be rooted out;—we will place these youths under good spiritual guidance. Madam," he exclaimed loudly, addressing Lady Arundel, "it were better to exert your sway, and to give up the boys willingly, or the terms of capitulation are violated; your garrison shall forthwith be put to the sword." Colonel Hungerford, as he concluded this speech, was loudly cheered by a tumultuous, and half-inebriated assemblage of men, whose excesses he had connived at; and who, collecting at this time in the hall, presented all that could be formidable to the defenceless victims of civil war.

Lady Arundel replied not; her attention was wholly absorbed in the objects

of the dispute. And now the different characters of the two boys might be clearly seen;—brought up in the same nursery, fostered by the same care, they were yet totally dissimilar. Claude clung to his mother's knees, and his arms were twined around her neck; and with the loud and piteous plaints of childhood, he begged her not to let him go; his character, poor child! was timid, sensitive, pliant: he had his mother's nature—kind, constant, fond, and easily depressed.

But Everard, older it is true, and of stronger frame, displayed the fortitude of his ill-starred father and grandfather. He clung, indeed, at first, to his mother, kissing her many times, and trying to dispel the wild, fixed gaze of despair, by whispers of childish counsel; but, when he clearly comprehended that his surrender was to save the castle, to save the garrison, to save all, he walked manfully into the centre of the hall, and stood there until two of the soldiers, by command of Captain Ludlow, led him away. As he was conducted to a door which

opened into the guard-room, the child turned round once, waived his hand to his mother, and, whilst tears choked and blinded him, he disappeared.

Claude was still nestled in his mother's arms ; her arms were folded around him ; but her eyes followed Everard—her eldest-born—who was her darling. To the mother's heart, the tie had been new ; the first-born offspring of an idolized husband. But the tender years of Claude, his dependence still upon her—God only knows how strong a bond there is between the mother and the infant child—were all-powerful in her affections.

She looked up at Lady Arundel. "I cannot part with him," were the words which broke from her lips : "they have taken Everard :—if it must be so, I will try, mother, for your sake, to bear it. Let me but keep one."

She bent her head upon that of her son ; they clung together so fast, that force only could have separated them.

Lady Arundel looked appealingly at Colonel Hungerford, and her tone was hum-

ble and altered, when she again addressed the victorious officer.

"Can any sacrifice of mine spare my daughter this last separation? Our castle is rich; there is an iron coffer, full of gold pieces; here are pictures and marbles; I have jewels, somewhere. Take all—all; but let not this poor child be torn from his mother."

"These things, madam," returned Col. Hungerford, angrily, almost fiercely, for he knew that he was acting an unpopular part; he felt that he was in the wrong; and, therefore, covered that consciousness by a burst of fury; "they are ours—that is, the Parliament's—at all events. The conditions I have told you. Remove the child by force!" he exclaimed, pointing to Claude; "no loitering; we have much to do;—we have the Lord's good fight to finish," he added, looking around at his soldiers for applause.

He was applauded. Shouts, cheers, threats, arose unto the very roof of the hall of Wardour. The nerves of Lady Arundel had been shaken by fatigue; she

was unused to scenes of riot and words of insolence; she had the courage of a strong mind, but she was a woman, and now she shook with fear.

She turned to Cecily, and gasped out, "It must be! My God, my God, have mercy on us!" Ere the words had escaped from her lips the boisterous ruffians had advanced; they had torn the child from the fond, tenacious grasp of his mother; they had unclasped the little hands which were fastened around her neck; they had rebuked his piteous cries. Instigated by political and fanatical fury, which turns men into demons, they had hushed all sentiments of compassion for the child, and for the mother from whose embrace they dragged him.

She—she, whose gentleness was such, that, in common life, she could not chide—she, who had been reared in indulgence, cherished, idolized—she now cast aside the feebleness and timidity of her natural disposition. For a moment, indeed, she stood, her arms extended, as she gazed upon the soldier who held the shrieking

child. For a moment Cecily was stupefied by those shrieks; then she clasped her hands, and ran distractedly into the very centre of the hall.

"Colonel Hungerford!" she exclaimed, with the vehemence of anguish, "give me back my child! Claude, Claude, come to me, darling! Oh! spare this one to me! He is so young! his age so tender! he can do no one any harm! Give me back my child! spare me my child!" She sank upon her knees, her hands still clasped, and for some moments all she could reiterate was, "Let me have my child!"

Colonel Hungerford looked confused, but his purpose was unaltered; and his instructions upon the subject of these very children were imperative. He made a signal to the soldiers; the signal was obeyed; in a few moments the sobs and shrieks of the affrighted Claude were heard no more; the guarded door was opened, and those who bore him vanished out of sight.

A sudden expostulation on the part of the same officer who had protected

Lady Arundel from the insolence of the rebel soldiers drew off for an instant the attention of Colonel Hungerford from the mother whose cries he had disregarded. He turned round in the midst of his discourse to order that Lady Cecily might be carried away, for she had sunk upon the floor. Blanch was leaning over her with a mute despair that drowned all energy, when the officer who had angrily addressed Sir Edward Hungerford broke off abruptly, and stood by her side.

“Let me, let *me*,” he said, with great deference, yet with strong feeling, “assist in bearing her hence. “Unhappy lady,” he muttered to himself, “well may she grieve, well may she tremble! Are you recovered now?” he asked, in a tone of deep commiseration, and almost of tenderness, as Cecily, with a deep sigh, opened her eyes. “She has relapsed into a swoon,” observed the officer, looking at Blanch, “let me carry her to an inner room; and you, you, so young, so lovely, remain in the presence of these—” The word which was about to be uttered was

suppressed. Ere Blanch replied, the gallant young man had borne Cecily in his arms, and laid her, with the delicate and kindly care that brave men show, upon a couch in one of the many rooms of the castle.

Blanch, recalled to recollection, looked eagerly round the hall for Lady Arundel. She was not there; and the young girl, gazing in every corner of the vast apartment, saw only armed men, their unrelenting commander, and the little council of officers by whom he was surrounded. Affrighted, almost distracted, Blanch fled from the hall. In her alarm, —for her spirits were also dismayed, and depressed by fatigue and terror, —she seized the arm of the unknown officer who had appeared to sympathise in the sorrows of the afflicted family.

The young man said, respectfully, but with some emotion, "I came to seek you; do not fear my leaving you." He then added, in a tone of indignation, but with a degree of boldness that startled his hearers, "Sir Edward, I withdraw myself

from all participation in this base disregard of conditions—this unmanly, this unsoldierly conduct. It will not be long, it will not be long,” he whispered to Blanch, “that the poor children are kept from their mother.—I repent me, I blush for my adherence to a cause which needs such aids!” he resumed aloud, whilst looking fiercely at Sir Edward Hungerford.

To the surprise of all who were present, the imperious man whom the officer addressed offered no reply to this open insult; nay, he even sought to deprecate the resentment of the stranger, by issuing commands in his presence that Lady Arundel should be treated with all due honour, and that no observance should be wanted for her comfort, or for that of the ladies, “his prisoners.”

“Prisoners!” repeated Blanch; and her unknown friend led her from the scene of so much misery—“are we then prisoners?”

For a time, the officer replied not; at length he answered, “Depend upon it,

madam, all shall be done to ameliorate that condition, that I"—he checked himself. "I trust," he added, as they went along, "that you will give me credit for regretting my co-operation with those ruffians."

"I hope," replied Blanch, "that you will be merciful; for, alas! we have no one to help us. Our friends are far away; we are poor women, defenceless now."

The officer replied not, but conducted her in silence to a small chamber; and, on the door being opened, Blanch found herself in the presence of her aunt and of Cecily.

What a meeting! and by what a night was that reunion succeeded! At times an oppressive stillness, broken only by the sobs of the disconsolate Cecily; then wild shouts, noises that implied destruction, the voices of the triumphant and rapacious military, who mercilessly, and contrary to the written agreement, pillaged the castle. Sometimes loud and countless footsteps, close to the door of the room wherein, strongly guarded, Lady

Arundel and her adopted children awaited their fate, alarmed them so much, that Cecily half forgot her woes in her terror ; at other times, a crash, as of thunder, stunned their nerves, filling the mind with dread, the worse, that it was undefined, and causing the lonesome watchers to long for the light of morning, to show them, at all events, the extent and nature of their misery.

At length, grey dawn crept into the room in which, pale, scared, trembling, these defenceless women had passed the night. The windows overlooked the pleasure ; but these unhappy beings turned from the gay scene, more wretched from having looked out upon the once-loved and ornate scenes of that beautiful spot. As morning advanced, and the rays of the sun gleamed fully into the room, the captives looked at each other, and wept.

“ We,” said Lady Arundel, after giving vent to her feelings, “ we, Blanch, must now think only of Cecily, poor Cecily. Happy is it that those far away from us know not what we suffer !”

"I wish," exclaimed Blanch, "that the officer who came to us at midnight would return; he seemed kind; he promised us to see the children, to use his efforts to keep them here. Surely, if he has a heart—"

"We must not trust in him, or any human aid," replied Lady Arundel; "let the unhappy address themselves but to one Source of comfort, for upon human help, I feel assured, we have now little reason to rely."

Whilst she spoke the door was opened, and he whose aid Blanch had invoked made his appearance.

Lady Arundel, distressed as her condition was, fixed a searching gaze upon the young man as he approached her. She dreaded treachery, and the kindness of the youth seemed to her excited and prejudiced mind almost as dangerous as the peremptory cruelty of Sir Edward Hungerford.

The young stranger, whom Lady Arundel thus suspiciously regarded, appeared to be about four or five-and-twenty years

of age. His dress and air had somewhat of a foreign character ; a mixture of the military and of the courtier, which, about this period, was by no means uncommon. He had on a garment of rich black velvet, over which hung a deep cape of embroidered cambric. The sleeves of his doublet were slashed with white taffeta, and finished with a deep cuff of vandyke lace, turned backwards, after the fashion of the day. The officer wore a small breast-plate, and held in his hand a helmet, garnished with white plumes ; whilst over one shoulder hung a richly-embroidered mantle.

But it was not in the habiliments, but in the air and countenance of the young stranger, that the eye of the observer might find subject for earnest contemplation. His figure was tall, very thin, and drooping, not so much, as far as could be determined on a cursory survey, by ill health, as by habits of study, and by a thoughtful, and somewhat serious character. His hair, which was a pale brown, was not left so long and flowing as that of

the Cavaliers generally, neither was it cut so short as the cropped locks of the party with whom he was associated; it fell, however, in unstudied clusters upon a high and white forehead, rendered remarkable by lines of thought, and by its nobleness and symmetry.

The features of the young officer were rather elegant than regular; the nose was aquiline, the mouth large, displaying an ample set of white teeth whenever the stranger laughed; his eyes were of a soft blue, with a very pensive, almost a melancholy, expression, when not lighted up by conversation—then their glance was animated beyond description, and genius, to use an old-fashioned word, beamed from the extraordinary brightness which lighted up those lucid orbs.

On the whole, the stranger was rather a very elegant, than a very handsome man. It was the elegance of habit, of good breeding improved by a cultivated mind, that gave him a peculiar grace in all that he said and did, and that marked him as such a contrast with the rude and

cold associates with whom he appeared to act.

Lady Arundel turned from the scrutiny with more satisfaction than she had expected to result from her inquiring gaze. The stranger had borne it with a mildness that seemed to say, "It is natural for you to distrust me." He bowed with deep respect to Lady Cecily, whom he next turned to address.

"I bring you good tidings of your sons, madam," he said, in a low, kind tone. "They are, indeed, gone hence; my utmost entreaties could not avert that;—but I have committed them to the charge of one whom I well know. I have sent my own trusty and long-tried servant with them. He will watch over their welfare; he will send us prompt and frequent tidings of their health."

She to whom he spoke, bowed down with sorrow, answered not; but Blanch, who was sitting by her, sprang up, and, drawing near to the stranger, said—

"Thanks—oh! thanks. She will bless you when she can. She will thank you

when the first bitterness of separation is over. Alas! sir, you are our sole refuge. Speak to him," she whispered, touching Lady Arundel's sleeve, "speak to him, mother; tell him we are indebted to him."

Lady Arundel arose at the bidding of her niece, for the humoured girl had acquired over the actions of all around her an habitual influence.

"We are, indeed, grateful to you for some compassion," she said, cautiously. "By what name are we to address our kind preserver—our only refuge, as Blanch hath said? Pardon me, sir," added the courteous matron, for she saw some confusion in the countenance of the young officer.

"Call me Sidney," answered the stranger,—“for the present; and believe that, whilst I am near you, you have a friend. I grieve to add, that we may not linger another hour under this roof. We must go hence. Your coach, madam, is already in the court. I have obtained a promise—and I blush to say, not easily—that your

jewels, wearing-apparel, and that of these ladies, shall be deposited in a carriage which is to follow with your servants. It is now my painful duty to inform you, that a guard waits at the door of this apartment. Let me commend you," he added, hurriedly, "not to linger. It will be a painful scene;—do not dwell upon what is now irremediable."

"You—you will not leave us?" cried Blanch, fixing her eyes upon the face of the stranger. "Oh! what will happen to us if you leave us?"

"That cannot be," answered Master Sidney, in a tone of kindness, and blushing as he spoke; "unless I am commanded to give up my trust. Colonel Hungerford has deputed me to conduct you in safety to Shaftesbury."

"I am glad," cried the impetuous Blanch, "right glad, that we are to have you for our escort, Master Sidney; and that we are to part company with that most despicable rebel, Sir Edward Hungerford."

"Hush!" cried Lady Arundel, alarmed,

"Pray, sir, pardon her levity—she hath been humoured from her infancy being an orphan; I take shame to say—both by my lord, and myself."

"I have, I have, indeed," cried Blanch, passionately; and, looking around her, at the habitation which she could no longer call her home, she gave vent to a sudden burst of tears.

But Lady Arundel and her relatives were now summoned to depart. They left the apartment with slow and silent steps, all save Cecily, who walked rapidly and impatiently forward, as if she hoped to find, in change of place, a remedy for sorrow. As they passed through the state apartments, distinguished for their splendour, persons appointed to take inventories of the costly furniture were measuring pictures, noting down the names of rare marbles, numbering articles of value. All this was for the future inspection, and to be submitted to the disposal, of Parliament, in whose grasp some of the finest and oldest properties in the kingdom were, at this time, held.

When Lady Arundel entered the hall, she shuddered, for a partial destruction, which had not been checked by Colonel Hungerford until much damage had been done, betrayed the vindictive and ruffian character of those who now were masters of Wardour. The noble chimney-piece, the pride of the castle, was the object of Sir Edward Hungerford's cupidity. Upon pretence of saving it from the hands of the soldiery, a number of workmen were employed in dislodging it, and large boxes were collected in which to place it piecemeal. But this was a sight comparatively cheerful to that which followed it. Two rare and invaluable pictures, "such," says an historian, "as Apelles need not blush to own," had been torn from the walls of the gallery, brought into the hall, and there wantonly cut into very shreds, the rich frames being cast on the fire-dogs.

Lady Arundel paused, and inquired meekly of a Roundhead soldier, who was sweeping the pieces of canvas into a heap,

"Wherefore had they destroyed these valued pictures?"

"They were idolatrous! madam"—was the stern reply, and Lady Arundel, dreading further insolence, moved on. She dared not trust herself again upon the scene of rapine, injustice, ruin,—and recall, as she looked, the comfort, splendour, and order which once reigned in that beloved home.

She passed, conducted respectfully by Mr. Sidney, into the inner court. She did not raise her eyes to the battered towers, the broken battlements, the still smoking ruins of the castle; alas! what a death-like gloom had succeeded the excitement of victory! The besiegers were creeping about, furtively, searching in the premises for plunder; some were carrying the wounded among their own party into the hospital of the fortress. Others were hastily conveying their dead—for sixty of the besiegers had perished—into the vaults beneath the chapel. The beautifully-carved fountain was made available to

quench the thirst of those who had drunk deeply on the preceding evening. That fountain was soon destined to destruction, and was succeeded by a deep well, which Captain Ludlow—such is the retribution which we see daily in this life,—was obliged afterwards to sink, when, Wardour being again besieged and regained, his men had nearly perished from that cruel expedient to which Colonel Hungerford had recourse, in order to deprive the garrison of Lady Arundel of water.

Lady Arundel spoke not until she had passed under the Barbican, crossed the drawbridge, and stood upon the grassy edge of the moat. Then she turned round, and, looking up at the battlements, bade, in a tone of heartfelt sorrow, a last adieu to the home of her wedded life. No expressions of indignation, no wishes for vengeance, no murmurs mingled themselves with that mournful farewell.

“God gave—He takes away!” was her ejaculation, as she turned and ascended into her carriage. After this, for many

many days, she mentioned Wardour no more, until time and reflection had chastened the bitter pangs with which the destruction of a happy home must have been recalled.

Cecily seemed stupified with grief. Once only she addressed herself to Blanch, and, touching her sleeve, pointed out to her the terrace, now black with gunpowder, and defaced by ammunition: then she wrung her hands, and looked up to the laughing heavens, blue and cloudless as on that day, never to be forgotten in the annals of a mother's memory.

Blanch, according to her nature—guileless and unrestrained—was overwhelmed with ungoverned sorrow. She raised her streaming eyes to the Barbican tower. "Farewell, dear, dear Wardour! farewell! May those who have lowered thy walls, be lowered in their turn! They have driven us out, exiles!" she added, passionately.

She wept so violently that Master Sidney was obliged to assist her into the carriage. She would scarcely avail her-

self of his assistance, so angry did she feel at that faction whom he aided—whether in the cabinet, or in the field, she had not thought about. Yet, when calm, Blanch reproached herself for her discourtesy to one who had proved a friend, as she could well divine, at his own peril; and ere the towers of Wardour had grown dim in the distance, her heart smote her for her ingratitude—even to a rebel.

CHAPTER VI.

What care would plot, dissension strove to crosse,
Which, like an earthquake, rent the tottering state ;
In warre abroad they suffer'd public losse,
And were at home despoil'd by private hate.

The Barons' Warre.—MICHAEL DRAYTON.

AMONG the prisoners of war who were compelled to share the fate of Lady Arundel and her family, there was one, whom all would gladly have left behind, could they have done so with safety to this individual. He was a relation of the Somerset family, who had gone to Wardour to be polished and improved—a hopeless undertaking; and, unhappily, cut short by the events just detailed; and Nigel Somerset was, therefore, quitting Wardour much in the same state of manners as when he had reached that once splendid and vaunted abode. He was an

unformed youth of twenty; short and mean-looking, *à la* William Rufus; with a head like a shock of ripe wheat; a low forehead; a nose, far from handsome; and a mouth, in the expression of which obstinacy and imbecility contended for the ascendancy. His face, indeed, had a mulish character, except when a pair of sharp fiery eyes, shrouded with long eyelashes, were raised from their usual direction, the ground, and fixed upon the person whom he chanced to address. Then a certain degree of acuteness—one can scarcely say intellect—provoked one the more, because it was manifest that the creature could behave better than he chose to do. Jumping in after Blanch, Nigel seated himself in a corner of the old coach, and maintained a glorious indifference, whilst tears and sighs were plenteous around him. Sometimes he sprang up to say, "Aunt, that fore-horse goes lame," or to toss small coin out of a very old and soiled leathern purse, which he carried; doing it so as to teaze and tantalize the poor beggars to whom

he scattered the money, and laughing when the miserable creatures failed in their search, but sank knee-deep in the mud in their vain efforts. This was one of his choice amusements; but he had another—to plague a little animal which lay at his feet, and whose large melancholy eyes, for it was one of those dogs the eyes of which seem half out of their heads, looked mournfully up whenever Nigel spoke;—and the creature trembled with fear. Blanch, who was not the most patient of mortals, bore all this for some miles; but her forbearance was, at last, exhausted.

“Insensible wretch! what impression have all our tears upon *thee*? Thou carest not to leave Wardour! and the downfall of our dear home,”—here Blanch’s voice was broken by her tears—“hath no effect on thy simple mind.”

“And if it had, my crying would not build it up again,” said Nigel, tossing up, and catching, some nuts, which he took out of his pocket.

Blanch looked at him with unfeigned

disgust. "Creature!" she exclaimed; "thou art not worth a thought." She fixed her eyes upon him with a lowering brow, as she added, "I will venture to say thou hast gathered those nuts at the very moment"—she raised her voice—"at the very instant that we were for ever,—(Cecily, darling, don't weep!) at the very instant we were for ever leaving Wardour." She applied her handkerchief to her eyes as she spoke.

"Since you say it, I dare say 'tis true that I did; and, if I had not the rebels would have taken them; so I ran down into the orchard, when nobody saw me—here's a store of apples too!"

"Let me not hear thy voice again for these two hours!" exclaimed Blanch, withdrawing her handkerchief from her eyes, and looking at Nigel as if she would, with great pleasure, have beaten him.

"—And leave Hero alone," said Lady Arundel, somewhat sharply, for the youth had begun, in self-defence, to pull Hero by the ears, and to pinch his tail.

"I wonder," said Lady Arundel, after

a long sad pause, "what has become of Sir Balthazar, perhaps, he is made prisoner; perchance he's killed—"

"—No chance of their eating him, after he's dead," said Nigel, with a gruff laugh; "though they say Waller's men are at their shifts for food. Hero!—Hero! I say—poor Hero—poor—poor Hero."

"Be quiet, Nigel, Hero is very well here.—Why, no; I trust, the poor old man is safe."

"They won't enlist him, think ye?" asked Nigel, raising his eyes, with a look half cunning, half silly, to his aunt; "I don't suppose he knows much of the sword exercise—or how to hold a pike."

"Fie, Nigel! he's a good, worthy man!" cried Blanch; "and far above any praise or censure."

"I should not like to be put upon teaching him how to shoulder arms," answered Nigel, cracking nuts most actively, and tossing one or two into Hero's mouth.

"For mercy's sake! Nigel, let us sleep;

we are weary with watching," said Cecily, in a most melancholy tone of voice.

"I did not hinder your sleep—I spoke not—who spoke first? and who spoke last?" said Nigel, now withdrawing from his pocket a medlar or two, and throwing out a few very decayed ones, to the troopers, who rode by the carriage—pleased to see their disappointment.

Before evening the ladies were lodged in the manor-house of Shaftesbury, where, to their infinite comfort and surprise, they were received and attended by females; and where they rested for some days. Mr. Sidney did not, for some time, obtrude himself; yet they felt the influence of his good offices. All that the most respectful consideration could suggest, in these troublous times, to soothe the progress of the disconsolate, and to banish the consciousness of restraint, was effected by the care of this compassionate friend—for so Lady Arundel and her family had now learned to consider him. They were, nevertheless, strictly guarded; and no means could be found to convey to

Lord Arundel, or to his son, or to Mr. Herbert, the news of their thralldom, the intelligence of the ruin of their estate, nor the detention of the young children from their pining — their disconsolate mother.

Uncertain of the well-being of her husband—dreading every day lest she should hear of some new engagement between the Royalists and Parliamentarians,—grieved by the deep dejection of Cecily, and anxious concerning the future destiny of her orphan niece, Lady Arundel, during her stay at Shaftesbury, became seriously ill; and her departure was retarded by an attack of fever. During this time of anxiety the acquaintance with Mr. Sidney progressed rapidly. One evening Blanch quitted the heated apartment in which her aunt lay, to breathe, by permission, the air of the garden underneath the bay-window in which she had been long sitting. The noises of the town were hushed,—the evening chimes of the church had rung out their last notes,—a star or two was seen in the deep azure, which was

skirted by a long cloud of the most delicate pink. There had been a gentle shower of rain in the afternoon, and the odours of many common flowers, which grew straggling in the garden, were drawn out by the warm and moist temperature of the climate.

“ I may hope now,” thought Blanch, as she leaned over a stone balustrade, “ to enjoy a little peace, and be free from Nigel for awhile. He’s at confession—I would he were confessing all day !—So these honest people, our hosts, are wool-staplers, born and bred to sell fleeces, and to make bargains ; very godly people, well to do, and spiritual-minded,” she muttered contemptuously. “ Such is their life,” she repeated to herself, “ when we are not forced upon them as their guests :—I wonder if they have their cares too—no—not such as ours ; their cares, I should suppose, are like their joys, quiet and deep—not poignant and ecstatic, like those of their betters. By my troth, Nigel already !—no, it is not Nigel ! You positively affright me, Mr.

Sidney!" she exclaimed, in a high key, for the young officer at this moment descended the steps, and stood on the broad and paved walk beneath her. In a few moments, as if by common consent, they turned together, and paced to and fro, the unconscious stars alone witnessing their interview.

"And wherefore," he said, in a gentle tone, "that deep and sad abstraction? I have been standing for some moments near to you, but you deigned not to speak to me."

"Master Sidney," returned Blanch, after some moments of thought; "I am here in a condition totally new to me. It presses upon my spirits; do not ask me any questions; do not touch upon griefs that you cannot remedy."

Mr. Sidney obeyed her commands—he asked no more questions; but he probably thought that the dejection of his young captive was increased by want of air and freedom—by the sameness of that mournful scene; for he said,

"There is a pleasant winding walk along

the river's edge—that wicket opens on the meadow—would it refresh your spirits to saunter awhile with the good woman of the house? I can secure you from molestation.”

Blanch looked wistfully towards the wicket, then up to the bay-window. “I cannot leave those two unhappy ones—no, I thank you—I thank you kindly, too.”

“Although I am a rebel,” said Mr. Sidney, whilst a smile played upon his face, “what did you tell me yesternight? that you blushed to be indebted to me?—that you held gratitude to Roundheads to be a crime?”

Blanch held out her hand. “Then I am guilty of that crime;—believe, believe, I meant no offence; I even offer my hand to the Roundhead. Ah, Master Sidney! would I could convert you from your errors; I have so *many* arguments—such reasons to unfold to you—”

“Try!” returned her hearer, touching the fair hand, which she held out to him, with his lips. “’Tis not four-and-twenty

hours past since you bade me know that I was not worth conversion. I am somewhat restored to your good favour now."

"Can you," cried Blanch, passionately, "see the destruction of all that is fair and good; the subversion of all that is righteous,—all that we have been taught to venerate, and not shrink from the path you must pursue? Look back on your wanderings and tremble. As I said, I *do* hate Roundheads and rebels;—and I never could endure the aspect of any one of them before."

"Have you, then, before the siege of Wardour, been in the company of persons so unworthy as myself?" asked Mr. Sidney, looking earnestly on the beautiful and animated face of the young royalist.

"No, indeed, my life has been passed among good Cavaliers;"—"and Papists?" interposed Mr. Sidney, in a low tone.

"Papists! No, sir! We scorn that opprobrious appellation. We of the Catholic Church reject your term '*Papists*!' You are laughing at me. But wherefore,

Master Sidney, apply a term so offensive, so unlike your wonted courtesy?"

"I thought you called my party 'Rebels,' 'Roundheads,'" retorted Mr. Sidney, mildly. "Pardon me; let us mutually abandon terms of invective and of irritation. Some time—some time when we are both more calm, I will crave permission to unfold to you those motives and principles which you tax so severely. I do not despair," he added, with a smile, "to win you one day over, to become a patriotic republican."

"Never! never!" exclaimed Blanch, holding up her hands in horror: "and if I thought you had such power, I should think you understood necromancy; I should shun you as a serpent; I should hide myself from your very glance."

"Then let us avoid such themes," replied Mr. Sidney, in a tone of much feeling; "anything but your shunning me—anything but teaching you to hate, to avoid me." He drew near Blanch as she spoke, and the respectful gallantry of his manner brought a blush into her cheeks. She laughed, when, an instant afterwards,

he bent one knee before her, and begged her to forgive him.

"Master Sidney," she cried, in some confusion, "you must, you must be aware that anything like gallantry and compliment to me now would be particularly distasteful: you must, if you please, remember that we are enemies—that you are a,—nay, I forgot—I will not say what—in short, that when we arrive at Bath, our acquaintance must cease and cease for ever. You have been merciful and kind. I will remember you in my prayers; but as to owning any further kindness for a—I entreat pardon, I do not wish to speak the word. I have broken the terms of our armistice;—I had best say no more. But yet it stings me to the soul, when I think of those poor children at Dorchester! How could you—how did you, being of the Council of war in the West, as you have informed me, consent to the infringement of every promise and condition at Wardour?"

"I pledge my honour, the honour of a gentleman," cried Mr. Sidney, solemnly,

“that I only joined Colonel Hungerford’s division the day before it entered War-dour; that I knew not of the terms of the capitulation; nor yet of the glorious and ever-memorable defence; and little, except by hearsay, of the heroic defenders of the castle!”

He spoke with much vehemence and agitation, and, turning hastily from Blanch, was about to ascend the steps.

He lingered, nevertheless, and added, “I will now release you from my presence. Since our acquaintance must for ever end at Bath, it had better end here. Rebels have eyes,—Roundheads have hearts; and outcasts, and condemned as they are, they merit not the scorn which they seem to inspire. Whilst I have the honour to conduct the escort of Lady Arundel, nothing shall possibly be omitted for her comfort and safety.”

He spoke rapidly, and somewhat haughtily, and, whilst Blanch was turning to reply, he disappeared, and, ere she could entreat him to return, Nigel, with Hero under his arm, appeared in the balcony above, calling his cousin to supper.

During their sojourn at Shaftesbury, the ladies of Wardour—as they were called—had generally enjoyed the company of Mr. Sidney at their noon-day dinner. Lady Arundel having been ill, that custom had been broken through; but still he had usually inquired at the door in the evening how Lady Arundel found herself,—how the other ladies had fared; and, upon Lady Arundel's convalescence, he had been admitted to the simple and early supper of which Cecily and Blanch partook. The ladies had enjoyed the elegance of his mind; they had, conjointly, on his departure, praised his manners. Even Cecily's dejection was slightly diminished in Mr. Sidney's presence; her grief was soothed by his sympathy; her confidence in his kindness partook of the sincerity and simplicity of her own nature; and, whenever she had heard him converse, she expressed a hope that all Roundheads might not be remorseless, vindictive, and deceitful.

When Blanch ascended to her aunt's chamber, she found Lady Arundel—whose

indisposition was now yielding to remedies—folded in a wrapper, and seated in an inner room, the door of which led down into a passage through which Mr. Sidney was wont to make his entrance. The supper-table was spread; the servants, who, by Mr. Sidney's care were enjoined to wait, were in attendance; but the young officer himself did not appear.

Lady Arundel twice inquired if Master Sidney would honour their poor meal with his attendance; but on being informed that he had gone out to walk upon the ramparts, neither she nor Cecily thought anything more upon the subject; they partook of their simple repast, and went to rest.

But, on the ensuing day also, Mr. Sidney was absent. Dinner-time came; he sent no inquiries concerning the health of his prisoners—the accustomed bouquet of flowers, or posy, (as it was then, in good old-fashioned phrase, called,) was now laid by careful hands upon Lady Arundel's reading-desk; no wonted observance was omitted; other matters of respect

were even more duly observed than ordinarily. Every delicacy that the failing appetite of an invalid might relish was placed on the dinner-table; wines were especially provided for the Lady Cecily; fruit, for which the country had been scoured, was sent up to the ladies for their refreshment.

"I know not how it is," remarked Lady Arundel, ere she composed herself to the afternoon's nap, "that I could not relish our noon-day meal to-day. True, we had every accustomed dainty; but I have grown into such a fancy of Master Sidney, that unless he comes to wish us good day, I cannot help holding a notion that he has been somehow offended."

"I," said Cecily, raising her eyes from her embroidery frame, "do not feel secure save when he is here."

It was the first symptom of returning composure when Cecily had begun to work. For days after her arrival at Shaftesbury she had sat mute, motionless, abstracted; never speaking, never employing herself; scarcely roused from

her reverie, even when spoken to; dead, not only to enjoyment, but even to observation—the power of memory seemed the sole faculty spared to the unhappy Cecily.

“This very frame,” pursued Cecily, counting her threads, “I owe to Master Sidney. Oh! it hath been a medicine to my wretchedness! And then he speaks so much, so kindly, of—” A few tears fell upon her embroidery, and she did not finish the sentence.

“Like all good men, he loves, and discerns the qualities of children,” muttered Lady Arundel, half asleep. “I wonder what family of Sidneys he belongs to. ’Tis an old name.”

“—Or what his history and pursuits in life,” said Cecily. “’Tis not the mere soldier’s education that has formed such a mind.”

“Cecily is never enthusiastic,” observed Lady Arundel, “save when she speaks of Master Sidney. I protest ye have spoiled my slumbers.”

“There,” cried Blanch, throwing a cambric handkerchief over Lady Arundel’s

head, and playfully closing her aunt's eyes with her hand, "go to sleep, and Cecily shall work, and I will sit beside you, and we will be silent."

Lady Arundel slumbered, and, for a time, Blanch sat, looking affectionately on the wrinkled brow, and pale face of her more than mother, and thinking how soon—how very soon—grief had left its traces on her countenance. But, soon weary of the monotonous sound of Cecily's needle, and rendered restless by her own perturbed mind, Blanch gently withdrew, and stole across some empty rooms till she found herself at a favourite window. This post commanded a small court on one side of the house, whither all who went out and came in must necessarily pass. Here walked the sentinel, and here the messenger-post-boy brought in the *Mercurius Rusticus* and *Flying Post* newspapers of weekly circulation—the only harbingers of the world beyond Shaftesbury which the captives there might hope occasionally to enjoy.

It was a little peep at the busy world ;

for a corner of the main street of the town was visible; and water-carriers—in those days well employed, from the scarcity of water in Shaftesbury — market-women on their rough steeds, and Independent Ministers who had superseded the clergy of the Established Church, sometimes turned round that corner to the Market-Place. Those who have known incarceration from any cause, may conceive the pleasure which Blanch derived from this glimpse of her fellow-creatures; and this afternoon, though the sun blazed in her face, that face was bent down for one whole hour to look into the court-yard before-mentioned.

The woolstapler — who had retired to a remote corner of his house, (the best in the town,) in order that the Papists, as *he* called them, might have room enough — was a man of decorous ideas; his wife was a woman of notable propriety. A sort of natural, artificial screen of plants was, therefore, made against this window, to protect the buxom nieces of the woolstapler from observation. There

was the prickly, old-fashioned aloe, which never took to flowering before modern times; the stiff, goose-tongued aloe—an especial favourite of mine hostess, and one of those easily-managed inmates that required water only once a month; there was the broad-leaved myrtle, so glossy and clean-looking, and so fragrant, that Blanch pulled a spray, intending—but the intention was not fulfilled hastily—to go back with it to her aunt.

She watched, as I have said, for an hour, pricked by the aloe, burnt by the sun. At the end of that hour, he *did* ride by—Mr. Sidney was himself visible; and, as he rode, with his rapier in his hand, into the court-yard, his fine horse curveting, his figure erect, his face blooming from the exercise, Blanch recalled all the preference and admiration which her relatives had expressed for Mr. Sidney, and which were fully justified by his mien and deportment.

She had secretly blamed herself for having offended one who had shown kindness even, as she surmised, at a risk to

himself. She had not found courage, when she had listened to the anxious conjectures of her aunt and cousin, to avow that she had checked the ready courtesy and zealous sympathy of their only friend. And why had she done so? Was it that any foolish notions of interest in herself on Mr. Sidney's part, made her shrink even from common attentions? She knew not. To Blanch communion with the world was altogether so new, that she was unfortunately launched into a career which required the utmost discretion and self-command, ere yet she had acquired either of those qualities.

Whilst she mused, she heard a step ascending the stairs which led into a room near her. Her resolution was taken; she felt certain that those footsteps were Mr. Sidney's; she was right; but the object of her dread and admiration contrived to escape her. She actually pursued him through one or two rooms, resolved that he should not avoid the society of his prisoners on her account—resolved to say all that was courteous and penitent to him.

Mr. Sidney stalked on before her, unconscious of the strange chase that was going on, and Blanch, half ashamed of herself, followed him until she heard his room door close, and found that she was shut out. Thus failed *that* project; and, when she returned to Lady Arundel's apartment, she had the mortification of hearing her aunt still talking of Mr. Sidney.

Old ladies were perfect Rouge-Dragons in those days. They knew every branch of every genealogical tree; could unfold the intricacies of intermarriages; could account for all hereditary traits; were able to reckon up the rent-roll of every estate in their native country; and had a royal gift of recollecting names and persons.

"He cannot be a Norfolk Sidney," Lady Arundel was saying; "one of the Wrighton family. Thomas, the last esquire, had only a daughter. Let me see! whom married she? A Godolphin, if my poor memory holds!—Godolphin of the White Eagle.' Then there are the Lei-

cester Sidneys; the Sidneys of Penshurst; the Sidneys of—”

“Master Sidney does bear a ‘White Eagle.’ I saw it on his servant’s cloak,” cried Cecily, as eagerly as if she had discovered some matter of vast importance. “And Claude, my poor Claude, you must remember, mother, as Master Sidney told us, played with the eagle on the groom’s staff. ‘Twas that,” added the mother, by her voice subdued, and muttering to herself, “that I knew my darling was himself again—and not affrighted by the wretches who tore him from me.”

“Where is Master Sidney?—why doth he keep away? I would fain see him; for, if he have any kindred with the Godolphins, I honour him, though I cannot pardon his defection from loyalty. They were an honest, valorous race, those Godolphins;—you, girls, cannot remember—but I can—my brother Worcester talking of Sir William Godolphin, who won the honour of knighthood at Arklow,—some time since, ’tis true,—in Queen Elizabeth’s days. Ah! he was the friend and companion of poor

Essex ! My brother Worcester loved him well ;—now *he* married a Sidney. Blanch ! go, seek Master Sidney ! or bid some one fetch him here. Cecily ! what ails Blanch ? Nay, child, what sudden scruples possess thee ? And why these blushes ?”

“To tell you the truth, aunt,” Blanch began, “I fear I have offended Master Sidney ;—some foolish jesting—I am very much chagrined,—but I taunted him with his rebel principles, and told him, Madam,”—and Blanch looked all humility as she made the avowal,—“that we could know him only till we arrived at the Bath.”

“Fie, Blanch, fie ! I am really angry !” cried Lady Arundel, sternly. “Wilt thou ever check thy foul tongue ? Is ’t not enough to gibe and plague thy cousin Herbert with thy sauciness, but thou must needs sadden the kind heart of a courteous and gracious gentleman of condition with thy raillery ?—The Godolphins have sat for the county of Cornwall,” she added, turning to Cecily ;—“in parliaments, when the people knew the constitution well—their duty well—and practised such alle-

giance that the King had only to command. I hope this gentleman doth not sit in parliament now."

"Well! I suppose we shall see no more of him, now!" said Cecily, in a piteous tone, "since Blanch hath affronted him. He was our only solace! He never turned from me when I poured out my distress to him; he spoke to me of my children; he bade me confidently hope to see them once again."

"Go to, Blanch!" exclaimed Lady Arundel. "I am really vexed—perverse, inconsiderate child! And thou wilt affront Master Herbert, in time; he will refuse thy hand."

"I cordially hope so!" replied Blanch, the colour coming into her cheeks, and joy sparkling in her eyes; "I don't wish to marry; and these times are so uncertain; the wars take off so many, that"——

"Worse and worse, Blanch! However, thou shalt not have thy way this time. I shall pen a letter to Master Sidney; bid him come to us anon; and I shall crave indulgence for thee, as for a foolish child

who knows not her own mind. I detest his principles ; but I own I like his bearing. He is a gentleman, trust me, Blanch, whatever thou mayst choose to say to the contrary."

"I do not gainsay it, Madam!" cried Blanch, blushing, while a smile lighted up a face which was formed for laughter.

"Yet thou treatest him like a yeoman! Fie, Blanch! God forbid thou shouldst behave so to Edward Herbert, when thou art wed! Be not sullen, child!" added Lady Arundel, observing the face of her niece change suddenly. "Come! come! thou dost not deserve I should forgive thee!" she added, gently repulsing the idol of her heart, as Blanch flung her arms around her offended relative, and kissed her with the fondness of a spoiled, but chidden child.

"And now, despite thy will, we hope to have Master Sidney here again. I have a thousand things to ask of him," added Lady Arundel, striving to excuse her partiality for a rebel—"whether it be true that our parks at Wardour" (and she

sighed) "were all destroyed by the ruffians there—Ludlow's men; the red deer killed and sold; our noble oaks cut down—just the season now when foresters like to fell;—nay, the very fish-ponds cleared, then left dry. Yet, what matters it to us?"

"And yet I have a presage, Madam," cried Cecily, "that the castle will yet be restored to its lawful lords—that we shall abide there once more—and the cruel usurpers of our rights be driven thence."

"Be it so!" answered Lady Arundel, gravely. "I dare not look forward, Cecily;—I am not strong enough in resolution to look back;—the present is enough for me. That I am well in body, sound in mind, right *here*"—and she laid her hand on her heart—"that my conscience pricks me not; that I have you, and naughty Blanch beside me—is enough to know. These are not times to look into the future. Happy for us, maybe, that we have not the fabled mirror which shows distant friends! And now, let me compose my letter to Master Sidney."

The letter was not despatched in haste. Nothing in those times was done in haste. Next to making a will, a letter was the most arduous literary employment that private individuals usually had to contend with. Spelling, which, until the reign of Anne, was arbitrary, did not hamper Lady Arundel's efforts: she spelt extempore: and when she had written plenty of double ees and double esses, she was tolerably comfortable as to her orthography.

But the phrases, the ceremonials, the niceties of letter-writing were never more sedulously observed than in the days when Lady Arundel sat down to pen an epistle. To say enough, yet not too much; to be civil, not familiar; dignified, not lofty; distinct, not verbose; were points which cost many a thoughtful hour to heads which, had they throbbed in our degenerate era, would have indited a chapter in the same period of time. Then there was the necessary flourish at the end of the name, considered polite and indicative of accomplishment; though not yet arrived at that elaborate pitch to which

it attained during the Hanoverian dynasty ; and which may still be traced in the very best epistles of elderly gentlemen and ladies, when in their very best humour, writing to some respected contemporary.

At length, after a long duration of silence in the room, Lady Arundel completed her despatch ; which, when folded, and even when sealed with a sort of half-penny-piece cipher-seal of her ladyship's, bore, in outward semblance, no small similitude to those documents which virtuous and affectionate washerwomen might write, in our days, to other functionaries of the same stamp. With all the refinements of Charles the First, his court, and nobility,—and, considering what they succeeded and what they preceded, they were singularly refined,—with all their luxury and taste, they knew not the comforts of fine woven paper and good sealing-wax. Their paper was—ghosts of the epistolary! rise not up against me!—yellow in colour, coarse in texture, scanty in quantity: they were marvellously sparing of it. The

wax was such as we now see on bottles of wine—of a spurious colour, hard, brittle, unfragrant.

Those, however, who could write and spell—and it was not all of the nobility, according to Horace Walpole, who could—were doubtless well satisfied with the coffee-coloured billets-doux which they sent forth: and Lady Arundel sank back with an air of self-complacency, when she had finished *her* letter. It was a task achieved; and literary ladies well know the inward gratulation which follows such efforts. Nigel was summoned to convey the epistle: and, after displaying a more than usual obtuseness of comprehension, his relatives at last succeeded in making him understand, that it was to be literally delivered, and an answer brought back.

Lady Arundel had now so far recovered from the shock, sorrow, and fatigue which she had endured at Wardour, as to evince the natural tendencies of her sex, and to return to her accustomed garrulity. She was like most women of active minds, remarkably curious; and the re-

tired life of aristocratic splendour which she had for years led, had always been varied by amiable gossip—if one may so apply and unite two words; by a minute investigation into the concerns of other people, without ill-natured constructions or mischievous repetitions. No; the old school was a school of prudence, cautions, of good faith—and prone to mysteries equally about the purchase of a gown, and the sale of an estate.

After an hour or two's respite, therefore, Lady Arundel and Cecily again began talking of Mr. Sidney, and of his relations; and were thus occupied when, ere the sun had declined, a low rap was heard at the door, and succeeded by the entrance of their hero. Lady Arundel, welcomed him with more than her usual cordiality, and Cecily rose from her seat, extending her hand to him, and saying, "I have been pining to show you this group of flowers, Mr. Sidney; and you would not come."

"Ah!" cried Lady Arundel—"It is my niece's indiscretion.—Blanch, come hither!—But she is heartily sorry for it,

Master Sidney; she acknowledges her fault, and that is one step to repentance. She is but a girl, and you will excuse her. Though, really, her waywardness doth often chafe me much—very much.”

“Nay,” exclaimed Mr. Sidney, — “I should indeed be unhappy if you blamed Mistress Somerset on my account. She has done nothing that deserves chiding. At all events, let it be forgotten, by *all* of us. Tell me, madam, how is your health to-day? And, my Lady Cecily?”

“We are as well,” returned Lady Arundel, sighing, “as captives may be. By the way, Master Sidney, we have solaced some hours in emblazoning your escutcheon. We fix you, in our minds, as kinsman to Thomas Godolphin—one of the most honourable and loyal of men; the chosen friend of my brother Worcester of Raglan, whose name you may have heard.”

“I have heard then,” replied Sidney, standing so that Lady Arundel’s piercing eyes could not look into his countenance, “the name of a high-minded nobleman,

a generous friend, a man true to his God, and to his own conscience ;—an excellent father, an ornament to the ancient race of which he is the representative. I remember an anecdote of his lordship, when he received the order of the Garter. ‘Thank, God!’ said he, ‘I wear the motto (*Honi soit qui mal y pense*) about my heart to as much purpose as many do about their legs.’ He is a mighty proper man, too ; years have sat lightly on him ; to say nothing of his great height, his robust make, where will you see a brow so noble, such an eye, a mouth so formed to utter the pleasantries in which his lordship delights, as those of my Lord of Worcester, even, in his eightieth year?”

“Why, you paint my brother to the life,” cried Lady Arundel, surprised ; “and where—where, Mr. Sidney, have you seen him?”

“I never was so favoured, but a school-mate, and college-mate of mine, a kinsman of the marquis—”

“—He has so many kindred,” interrupted Lady Arundel ; “we were thirteen of us ; and, my brother, Worcester, has thirteen

living children at this moment. Raglan, is their rallying point; the home for the sick ones, the refuge for the imprudent, the nursery for the little ones, the college for such as are more advanced—to say nothing of its being an excellent school of arms, for my brother keeps a garrison there. But to return to the Godolphins.”

“I must, I fear, take my round on the ramparts,” said Mr. Sidney, looking uneasy, “another time.”

“Only set my mind at ease,” pursued Lady Arundel, eagerly. “You are no relation of that famous—or, I should call him, infamous—Sidney Godolphin, who hath engaged with the parliament men, profaning his incomparable talents; abusing his gift of poesy, and disgracing the loyalty and honour of his forefathers?”

She looked earnestly at Mr. Sidney, as she spoke. Lady Arundel spoke for reproof, for warning, to one whom she considered as a misguided man. She had a motive; by thus pointing out to him the errors of one whom she guessed to be a

kinsman, she might save her favourite, and friend, from a similar career. Like all old ladies, she had a vast confidence in the power of advice—an investment of intellect generally yielding but a poor return of interest.

Mr. Sidney had turned to leave the room, but, as Lady Arundel's harangue lasted longer than he had expected, politeness had compelled him to stay. As he stood, the colour on his cheeks changed into a vivid glow. He did not look abashed, but excited. His eyes, usually so soft, sparkled with a remarkable expression; and Blanch, who had silently watched every turn of his countenance, thought that she had never beheld such a look. She was not surprised, for she had always fancied that Mr. Sidney was no common individual; when, after a moment's consideration, he replied, with great deference, yet with equal firmness:

"I am the man whom your ladyship thus honours even in naming me. The world has far exceeded the truth in re-

gard to those powers which would devolve upon me a heavy responsibility. But it is mistaken ;” and Mr. Sidney spoke loudly and fearlessly, “if it assigns to my motives ought but conscience to my country,—sorrow for an oppressed people,—duty to my God.”

Lady Arundel turned to reply ; but Mr. Sidney Godolphin had left the room.

CHAPTER VII.

“ How deep the sigh that rends the heart,
Which, breaking, still its hopes conceal ;
How keen the pang when lovers part,
And dare not, must not, love reveal ;
O let these faltering accents tell,
That breathe a long, a last farewell ! ”

SIDNEY GODOLPHIN, thus introduced to the reader, described by Lord Clarendon “ as a young gentleman of incomparable parts,” had the misfortune to be engaged in public life before his judgment was matured, and whilst the passions and prejudices of youth were strong within him. His education had been directed to form an elegant, rather than an energetic, character ; like many men who were afterwards forced into active service by the exigencies of the times, he had been destined to civil, not military pursuits. His tastes were those of a

scholar ; his disposition inclined to domestic life ; and an ardent and romantic nature had indulged itself in the graceful exercise of a poetic fancy.

Thus endowed, at twenty-one years of age, whilst his elder brother, Sir Francis Godolphin, was engrossed in raising the credit of his family by military prowess abroad, Sidney took his seat in Parliament, as member for his native county of Cornwall ; and he became deeply imbued with those principles which actuated some of the noblest spirits that ever graced our island. He believed—and he was not singular in his belief, nor, in some respects, perhaps, mistaken—that the purest motives impelled the great minds to which the downfall of monarchy was attributable. For a season he had implicit faith in their disinterestedness ; he applauded their manly resistance to oppression, and he separated himself from his brothers who had, without exception, joined the party of the royalists.

The first steps which were taken by Charles the First—the fatal errors com-

mitted by that monarch ; his refusal, among other acts, to accept the propositions the Parliament made to him, at the very commencement of the war at Beverley—these, and many other considerations, which belong to the province of history, confirmed the high-spirited young patriot in his political views. He had joined that party which appeared to him to support the constitution which he revered. He became one of the varied group upon whom the eyes of Europe were fixed ;—subordinate, indeed, to those great men, yet, from his oratorical talents, and that “bewitching popularity,” as Lord Clarendon calls it, which resulted from his manners and attainments—he was, for some years, the associate of Essex, Warwick, Kimbolton, Digby, and others of scarcely inferior merit. And had these noblemen, and those by whom they were supported, continued to be what, at the outset of the troubles they were, many, who afterwards repented their co-operation with them, and returned to their al-

legiance, would have fought until their death, in the ranks of the parliamentary forces.

But the "dangerous commodity of rebellion,"—to borrow a phrase of the times;—the necessity of sacrificing right to expediency; the desperate nature of the game; the temptation to violate every honest principle, and to crush every good feeling in the many changes and chances of civil war, broke down those high intentions by which high minds were at first upheld in the great contest. Men of ruined fortunes, and of infamous character, gladly joined a party in which a pretended religion, and the plea of hatred of popery, covered a multitude of early and late delinquencies. Real lovers of the presbytery and the directory shrank from associating themselves with these adventurers, and drew back into private life, or even joined the royalists, upon the discovery of those motives by which their fellow combatants were actuated.

But it was the atrocities, the destruc-

tive temper, and the violation of oaths and promises, which disgraced the popular party, in the course of the contest, that disgusted good men, and drove them from a cause which, as Englishmen, they had seriously at heart. Amongst those whom the Parliament much caressed, were the relatives of royalist families, whose defection from Charles was a source of triumph, and an occasion of augmentation to his opponents. Sidney Godolphin had been, on that account, permitted, with impunity, to pass his censures upon the rapacity and cruelty of Hungerford. His indignation was forgiven—forgotten; but the events which drew it forth were not forgotten by the humane and kind heart of the accomplished Sidney. They supervened upon previous disgusts; they irritated wounds which had been partially healed; and, out “of pure indignation of soul to them,” as it was said and believed, he finally withdrew from those in whose boat he had intended to sail; and became, as events will disclose, one of the most distinguished supporters of

that party, which he had, at an earlier period, designated as oppressive and iniquitous.

It must be acknowledged that, at present, Mr. Godolphin's disgust had not reached its height; he was captious on the subject of his opinions, because doubtful in his own mind of their soundness; but the idea of change—the notion of deserting that great cause of liberty for which he had felt all the ardour of a first love, had not presented itself to his imagination. So little do we, so little can we know,—not only to what the events of life will tend, but also what our own wavering but head-strong wills may lead us to contrive and perform in this life of changes and chances.

Ere the ladies of Wardour had recovered from their consternation at finding in the person of their friend one of the most obnoxious of the opposite party,—ere they had had time fully to discuss the theme, it was intimated to them, through Mr. Godolphin's secretary, that they were

to proceed, on the following day, to Frome.

The only person who received this intimation with pleasure was Nigel, who began to find, marvellous to say, the want of something to do. Not but that he was more incessantly occupied than any one else; his was a sort of laborious idleness; teasing cats, shooting at pigeons with pop-guns, playing with Hero, and talking to the worthy woolstapler's wife's parrot. Independently of this, Nigel had still a great deal of tutoring to go through from Lady Arundel, who saw rather more plainly into the young man's deficiencies during the interregnum of their captivity than in the bustle of Wardour. The graces, she observed, were totally wanting: he knew not how to bow nor speak civilly; his shoe-strings were ever untied; his pockets gaping open; his hair lank, and uncurled; to say he was unwashed, would be no libel; and when he could not fill up his time otherwise, he occupied it in biting his nails. Add to this, that the use of forks at dinner had not very

long been introduced; and Nigel was awkward in the management of this domestic article, and was apt to lay it down, and eat in the original and natural way, when not observed and taxed by Lady Arundel or Blanch; so that his education was yet to be completed, with much vexation of spirit to those who undertook the task, in the process.

The news of their removal drew Nigel forth from the bay-window, where he was watching the progress of a cobweb, into the centre of the room.

“—There’s fly-fishing in the Frome; and, maybe, if the Roundheads will trust me on my word, I shall have some sport,” he said with great alacrity.

“Trust *thee*! To be sure they will!” exclaimed Blanch contemptuously. “Why, if thou wert lost altogether ’twould not ruin our cause.”

“Fie, Blanch,” said Lady Arundel; “remember he’s thy kinsman. Ah me! we came unwittingly to Shaftesbury; and sadly we depart. My mind misgives me that we make no good exchange in our

prison. As I sat alone last night," added Lady Arundel, who, in common with weaker minds, could not dispel a faith in omens, "the crickets' shrill voices came to sadden me, whilst ye, my children, were absent."

"— And there was a winding-sheet in the candle," said Nigel, with a look gravely stupid; "the owl in the church-tower shrieked, the dogs howled, the death-watch ticked, the magpies chattered, and Master Sidney Godolphin's bay mare neighed thrice."

"— Be silent!" cried Blanch imperiously. "List you not my aunt would fain speak?"

"— Where we shall be disposed of," said Lady Arundel sorrowfully; "whether an exchange can be effected, or whether we shall be separated; but no, I cannot think that Mr. Godolphin, poisoned as his mind is by rebellious notions, will consent to any cruelty, or will take my children from me."

"We shall go farther from Dorchester; we shall be many miles separated from

my children," cried Cecily, dashing the tears from her eyes.

"By this time," returned Lady Arundel, "those who care for us will have learned our fate. We have been one long fortnight here; 'twas last Tuesday se'nnight that we came hither.—Blanch, help me to my bed, for I am weary, and even faint. I know not why, but gloomy forebodings oppress my spirits."

Blanch flew to her aunt; and ere long, Nigel being banished to the court-yard—for his presence kept up a sort of irritation,—the exhausted Lady Arundel sank into repose. Cecily was busied in preparations, and Blanch, after aiding her for some time, went to the window.

Lady Arundel slept in an inner room. And in this warm night of June the window of the sitting-room had been left open, and the mingled scents of the garden-flowers greeted the senses of Blanch, as she leaned out upon the lattice. She tried to see, through the gloom of evening, the limited but pleasant spot which had afforded her a daily walk,

whence she had culled flowers for the heart-sick Cecily, and where she had sometimes fancied herself free. With what other associations she cherished the thoughts of that square, formal enclosure, she dared not ask herself. Did she now wish to be free? She shrank from the self-interrogation. She blushed to feel that she dreaded the moment when, at liberty, a final separation must and would take place between the captives and their gaoler. "And we shall never, never meet again," she muttered to herself. "If we ever reach Ragland, as it is surmised, I must hide, even from my confidants, the very gratitude and regret which I shall ever feel; I must forget even that I knew the rebel — as they will call him. He will soon forget me; he will be so mixed up with the affairs of those who would crush us, that he too will soon wish to crush us. It is best; it is for the best; how could I ever hope that we might even be permitted to see each other, after once we part?"

- A gentle "good night" under the win-

dow, and the hasty rustling of some person underneath, drove Blanch, in confusion, back into the room. But the delicious consciousness that she was watched, and a subject of care,—that she was restored to a good understanding with one who occupied too great a portion of Blanch's thoughts, deserted her not all the night, throughout which she strove in vain to analyse and repress her own feelings, and to correct the error of her ways.

Sometimes, in this, the first dawn of an attachment which formed the bane of her life, the impetuous Blanch recurred for an instant to Mr. Herbert. It was to shudder at the very mention of his name. She had never loved her betrothed; and the chain which bound them to each other made the recollection even of the handsome and high-spirited youth a source of disgust. Yet Mr. Sidney, melancholy, mistaken, prejudiced, was not to be compared, in outward attributes, with the husband selected by her kindred. Love is not skilful at comparisons; Blanch turned

contemptuously from the very idea. Personal beauty had no charms for her. The clear strong head, the polished taste, the captivating elegance, the delicate and deep feelings, of the rebel,—and she writhed as she mentally pronounced the word,—could never, never be effaced from memory, even were a thousand Herberts to lay their hearts at her feet.

The next morning the ladies left Shaftesbury. They were escorted by a party of horse; Mr. Sidney, in a military garb, riding at the van, and Nigel, to the great relief of the ladies within the coach, was allowed to ride a sorry jade, not wretched enough to be killed, but which he had the comfort of goading and pricking to his heart's content. In order to escape observation, they set out early; yet the freshness of renovated nature had vanished from the surrounding country. As they passed through the silent streets, they looked eagerly out upon the place of their abiding during the first period of imprisonment.

Lady Arundel was well acquainted

with Shaftesbury, and, after a momentary glance, she sank back again, observing to her companions that "Times are sorely changed now. I remember when this town was noted for its former piety; and when the walls of the nunnery, founded by the pious Elfgiva, were standing. But now—" she was interrupted; for, on the cavalcade emerging from the arch of the gateway, Mr. Godolphin rode up to address her ladyship.

He begged respectfully to know how she had passed the night; and, after receiving a courteous reply, he added—

"My instructions were received at so late an hour, and were so peremptory, that I could not apprize you of our march to-day. And I am now forbidden to disclose to your ladyship the place of your present destination, lest by any chance you might convey the intelligence to Lord Arundel. On one point rest assured,—it shall not be to the region of infection."

He spurred his horse on as he spoke, and rode up to the head of his troop.

Lady Arundel made no observation; but, taking out a devotional book, endeavoured to fix her attention upon its contents.

It was eight o'clock when the troop entered the grassy track of the forest of Gillingham, and refreshed their horses, for a brief space, in the glassy stream of the river Stoure.

"It seems like a dream," whispered Blanch to Mr. Godolphin, who now rode up to the window nearest to which she sat, "that we are here; and that you should be our guardian—angel, I should say;—but you Puritans do not believe in angels."

"And how could you guess that I am a Puritan?" replied Mr. Godolphin, somewhat gravely; "you wilfully misunderstand my motives, wishes, feelings." He spoke with an air of vexation; and Blanch perceived that she had again unintentionally wounded him: so difficult is it for persons of different religions, and of different opinions, to escape dissension in this erring and pertinacious world.

"Well," replied Blanch, angry with

herself, and, therefore, not quite at peace with any one else, "it little matters; we shall soon part for good at Frome—most likely! or, at all events, at the Bath."

Mr. Godolphin answered her only by a grave and searching look. Then he rode away to his duties; and, during the rest of their journey through the forest, Blanch saw nothing,—not the gnarled oaks, old as the hills,—not the white water-lilies which grew by the sedgy side of the river stream, throwing up their alabaster cups from the clear deep green of the water,—not the startled squirrels which fled to the topmost boughs of the beech, as the carriage wheels resounded,—not, in short, anything, save that appealing look which went to her fond heart, obliterating every recollection of rebels and Roundheads, Cavaliers and Catholics, and even dispelling the image of Mr. Herbert altogether.

Engrossed with these thoughts, villages were passed, hills surmounted, towns were seen in the distance, with little interchange of conversation between Blanch,

her aunt, and cousin. At length, after passing round the Beacon Hill, and leaving to the right King's Deverill, and Maiden Bradley, the party approached the town of Frome, which Mr. Godolphin appeared anxious to reach ere the gates were closed.

Hitherto, the region through which the travellers had passed, disclosed little of the effects of that consuming contest which was desolating the midland counties of England. Troops of military quartered in the once-peaceful villages, betrayed, indeed, that the country was under martial law; but these were all parliament soldiers, and they had their unhappy empire, at present, entirely to themselves.

Frome was strongly fortified; and parties were riding, here and there, scouring the country, on the evident look-out for an attack. All signs and sounds of rural occupation were hushed; the labourer, in the cottage by the road-side, had barred his shutters and closed his door; and the cheerful blazing of the wood-fire, and the

peep into the homely scene which the traveller, in ordinary times, might enjoy, was no longer to be seen. The milk-maid, scared from her employment, no longer curtseyed as the passengers hurried along on their journey. She, even before sunset, had retreated within the homestead, affrighted, lest, on the morrow, her master's kine, and her vocation, should be invaded by some ruthless band,—whether of Royalists or of Roundheads, she little cared. All the brute creation of value were carefully penned up in their respective homes,—all, that is so many as had been spared from the hands of those who, whether foes or friends, were equally prone to avail themselves of the property of the disconsolate and ruined farmer.

The roads were dreary and deserted. The sheep-bell no longer tinkled on the moor; the shepherd's dog was mute. There was a death-like stillness in the air; yet, how tranquil, how blessed that scene compared with the fierce passions, the irremediable distress, want, woe, and, perhaps, worse than all, the dire spirit of

revenge which reigned in the very sphere of action !

Towards evening, the ladies found the power of speech return upon them ; the night was overcast, and a driving rain,—a mournful conclusion to the brightness of the morning,—obscured the prospect. Themes more gloomy than usual occurred to Lady Arundel's thoughts.

“ We,” she said, in a melancholy, yet not complaining tone, “ are driven from house and home, to — we know not whither. Well ! Providence has sent us one kind friend. Misguided young man ! He will, I fear, come to an untimely end. Our royal master says, ‘ Anticipate not the judgments of Heaven on these rebels ; punish them not ; leave their condemnation to a Higher Will than human vengeance.’ ”

She paused, and then observed, “ What is our condition to those of our friends at Oxford ? God knows how they will weather the storm ; happy they who are in action ; ’tis the unoccupied who suffer.”

At this instant, Mr. Godolphin rode up to the carriage; and, motioning that the glass might be put down, said, "See the cheering lights! there is Frome: and soon, very soon, you shall have warmth, and good cheer—nay, hospitality, if you will accept it from rebels. You are very weary?" he added in a low tone to Blanch,—her hand was resting on the open window,—he gently touched it as he spoke. Blanch started back, as if some action of guilty audacity had af-frighted her. Mr. Godolphin rode for a few moments by her side, and then galloped on.

The town was in commotion as the party slowly entered the main streets. Bells were ringing, boys were shouting, the voices of women were high in discourse, drunken soldiers were parading the streets—all was in powerful contrast to the obscure and quiet country which the travellers had left. Presently loud cries, as of triumph, rang from the centre of the town. The party passed into the market-place;—rough music, the ancient

but certainly not venerated sounds of marrowbones and cleavers, almost deafened the weary ladies who thus entered upon a scene so new to them,—one of the strongholds of the parliament.

As the carriage drove up towards the gateway of an isolated house, the words “Victory! victory! victory! over the Royalists!—Destruction to the Lord’s enemies!—Triumph to the saints!” reached their ears. The heroines of Wardour!—they, who, in their home, were valiant, quailed before the ruffian band of an excited people. They grasped each other’s hands, nor could they even speak to congratulate each other that they were guarded by one who would not let harm come to them.

Presently, the carriage was rudely checked in its progress, and violently shaken. The vengeance of the mob was aroused! Dark and menacing eyes glared through the twilight at the window; the panes of glass were broken by eager hands. “Let us see the prisoners!” was the fearful cry.

A piercing scream was the only sound uttered within the coach. Lady Arundel, her forehead streaming with blood, sank back. Cecily—Blanch, knew little more of what happened, until they heard a shot or two ;—then came groans—then a sudden silence ; the carriage again moved on ;—it stopped, the door was opened, and Mr. Godolphin, on foot, appeared to re-assure his persecuted prisoners.

“Do not care for me,” were the first words that Blanch could gasp out, for the young man looked at her with undisguised anxiety. “Oh, we are safe now *thou* art come ! Take us, dear, dear Mr. Godolphin to some safe place ! My aunt !—oh, guard her age from such outrages as these !”

“You are safe,” replied Mr. Godolphin. “The ruffians,—they deserved their fate, —have suffered ;” he looked pale and almost wild, and gave his pistols hastily into the hands of a servant.

“I had best be without them,” he muttered to himself, as he lifted Lady Arundel out of her coach, and, with the ten-

derness of a son, bore her in his arms within the retired and gloomy house prepared for the prisoners. Then, returning to the court-yard, he conducted the cousins, who were hastily following him, into their new abode.

"You were frightened? you are trembling?" he whispered to Blanch, in a tone of tenderness. "Lean on me. Oh, if you knew how—" he stopped suddenly short in his speech, and, falling back behind Cecily and Blanch, he allowed them to walk on alone.

Lady Arundel had recovered her composure. Her forehead had been grazed by a piece of broken glass.

"I am a poor soldier," she said, smiling, "to be shot dead by a morsel of glass off my own coach. Thank you, my kind friend, for conducting the poor scared birds to their nest. We shall be safe here—with *you*."

Mr. Godolphin did not answer for a moment or two; then he busied himself in giving orders for all that could mitigate the dreariness of the temporary residence.

"I have a strong guard planted round the court-yard," he said, addressing Lady Arundel, but fixing his eyes on Blanch, "the bigotry and fury of these poor people have alarmed you; they are dispersed now—"

"How pale! how agitated you are!" cried the kind-hearted Cecily, observing that Godolphin stopped short, and that a sudden emotion shook his frame. "You are not wounded?"

"No, madam," replied Godolphin, whilst a smile lighted up his countenance for a moment. It was succeeded by gloom. "I—I never before took away human life!—these wretches irritated me—I fired upon them—" he turned aside for a moment:—"to most men these occurrences are common: they are not so to me. I shall recover in a moment; but my mind misgives me that exhortation might have availed."

He walked about the room in much agitation.

"If such," said Lady Arundel, "were the general sentiment of your party, Mr.

Godolphin—a feeling so honourable in you—we should have been spared so much misery in this our fated land—the sacrifice of Camden—for instance.”

“Madam,” answered Mr. Godolphin, “think not that I mean to retort upon you; both sides are culpable: the atrocities are monstrous! Think of the late scenes enacted at Cirencester!—men driven like beasts before the very eyes of the merciless Rupert!—he who has lifted the Englishman save his valour. I crave,—I entreat pardon! I am weary and unhappy—most unhappy! To-morrow I hope to make my peace.”

He bowed reverently to Lady Arundel and her companions, and then hastily withdrew.

“He is unfit for such scenes. Poor, poor young man!” exclaimed Lady Arundel, and she closed the door, and as she, and the dear to her were left to their own reflections. She gazed around her on the low parlour in which she was now domiciled, and silence lasted for many minutes.

Those who love each other really, and

garrulous when together. Neither of the three ladies, hitherto, had a thought hidden from the other. They spoke freely upon their feelings, their fears, their hopes; and in arranging the scanty articles of books, medicine, and writing-instruments which they had been permitted to bring from Wardour, and in carefully dressing the slight cut on Lady Arundel's brow—for both the young ladies were excellent surgeons—an hour passed away before supper appeared: an hour consumed in kind offices and gentle converse by the ladies; and passed by Nigel in a manner equally agreeable, by a close colloquy, and perchance communion, with a monkey, then a very common domestic animal in most houses.

Supper was brought in by a serving-woman,—“neat-handed Phillis,” as Lady Arundel called her,—and the ladies took the opportunity of her appearance to ask in whose house they were?—whether the town was quiet?—and what victory it was that the common people—for the

ladies did not dare to use any other phrase)—were proclaiming?

The menial stared, curtseyed, and then fled; for she was too good a Presbyterian not to conclude that converse held with "Romans" must end in ruin, and in her eternal destruction.

Lady Arundel had brought no attendant from Wardour,—not even the aged tiring-woman, who had, since her marriage, waited upon the Lady of Wardour. She could not help laughing at the strange vicissitudes of fortune.

"Here are we," she observed, as she sat down (still with dignity, for that was a part of her very nature) to a repast consisting of trout from the Stoure, strawberries and cream, buttered eggs, and other articles proper for the day, for it was Friday, — "here are we, who, when we were wont to go to the convent at Kingston Deverill to be shriven, or chose to grace Maidley Bradley on fair-days, were greeted with 'Your service, madam! long life to ye!' 'Blessings on ye!' 'The Holy Virgin prosper ye!' and the

like,—are now confined like noxious beasts, hunted as such, and avoided as if we were lepers, even by the simple lass who spreads our board. Well ! let us be thankful that we have food — health — reason ! Ah ! Master Sidney — I crave pardon, Master Godolphin, I would say—you are come to share our white meats with us. Do not be alarmed. Our grace has been said ; no idolatrous rites shall shock your prejudices. Sit down ; we shall eat better if you partake. Hold ! Phœbe, Lettice, Chloe, Peg, whatever thy name—whether prosaic or poetic—bring this goodly gentleman a beaker of wine ; he is faint, methinks, — and look to the fire. I love a fire, even on summer-nights—and that the kindest of gaolers well knows, it seems.”

Mr. Godolphin had changed his military suit, and cast off all weapons of defence, save his sword ; and he wore a costly and becoming dress, respectfully assumed in honour of those whose very misfortunes were a claim, in his mind, to reverence.

“I am glad to see you smile,” resumed Lady Arundel. “Well, lasses, we are in a goodlier condition than my poor cousin Lady Fanshawe. Before our troubles, she had hers to pity”—and Lady Arundel drew from the pocket of her dress a letter which she had, during her imprisonment, again and again perused. “‘From as good a house as any in England,’ writes my friend, ‘we came to a baker’s in a very obscure street; and from room well-furnished, to lie in a very bad bed in a garret—’ this is from Oxford, Master Sidney—‘to one dish of meat, and that not very well ordered.’ We are better off,” bowing to Godolphin, “thanks to your kindness! ‘No money, for we were as poor as Job!’ Ah! there we are more unlike!” said Lady Arundel, shaking her leathern purse which hung at her girdle—“no clothes more than a man or taborer brought in cloak-bags.” Does not that touch you somewhat to the quick, Master Sidney, who sit there so *point de vue* whilst we are not fit to hold up a candle to admire you?” She laughed heartily as she spoke. “This,” continued La

Arundel, looking slyly at Mr. Godolphin, "is civil war: let those who began it answer for it."

Her words, unluckily, rather confirmed a wavering mind in the way that she condemned, than acted as Lady Arundel contemplated. She had, all her life long, been so looked up to, that she had a vast confidence in her own opinion, and in her powers of persuasion and conversion.

The supper was cheerful, the conversation well sustained, and there was but one drawback to the vivacity, and even elegance, of their discourse, namely, the unfortunate Nigel. When the ladies ventured to be merry, he was coarse, free, and vociferous; when they were sentimental, he laughed the louder; and Lady Arundel, who now became desirous that Mr. Godolphin should entertain an elevated opinion of his prisoners, whom he treated as guests, felt that there was no chance of maintaining the dignity of the family where Nigel was. As fast as she upraised it, he lowered it; and worldly estimation is more easily lowered than raised.

At length Lady Arundel spoke out.

“Nigel, I would fain admonish thee not to bandy tricks with yon ape at the door, but to sit quiet in thy seat; the monkey is kept for the fool, or jester, of the governor, not for thy pastime. I would not trifle with the creature, lest they should conclude,” added the good lady, with dignity, “that thy nature resembleth his.”

“An if they buy me for a fool,” said Nigel, raising his eyes for an instant, “they’ll have no bad bargain. Joco,—poor Joco,—crack a nut, Joco!”

“Possibly not; for a young man is generally known by his companions. Yet discredit not, Nigel, thy kindred, who are of excellent repute. Mr. Godolphin, my kinsman’s father, hath a noble seat at Troy, scarce five miles from Raglan—Sir Thomas Somerset of Troy,—(Nigel, return Master Godolphin’s courtesy; he hath bowed to thee,)—of which this youth,” added Lady Arundel, with a gentle sigh, will have a fair inheritance. ’Tis an ancient family. Nigel, dost know thy pedigree? ’Tis a knowledge in these times,

Godolphin, of no small service, to as would fain forget what they owe old ancestry."

"Shall I rehearse it, aunt," asked with a glance at the supper-table. "It will not be longer than Master Lud-grace."

"The boy doth not want wit," thought Arundel, inwardly delighted with ally; but she courteously apologized Godolphin for the allusion to his party, quietly turned the conversation to elegant repast, and the sumptuous afterwards set before them. Her remarks were interspersed with occasional, very necessary, hints.

"Nigel, thank Master Godolphin for bringing thee to March-pane. Nigel!" in a kinder tone, for the youth went on eating and even pocketing, pistachio-nuts, kernels, raisins, dates, and almonds, without heeding her.

"Is not *his* March-pane," answered the youth, at last. His speech was echoed in a running cadence of reproofs, which made about as much impression as a

shower-bath would do upon the Giant's Causeway.

"Are ye speaking to me?" was all the notice that Lady Arundel, Blanch, and even the gentle Cecily, could extort from their offending kinsman.

"Time was," resumed Lady Arundel, vainly essaying to raise the honour of her kindred, "when I have eaten cherries at Troy, when they were twenty shillings the pound in London. — Sir Thomas Somerset is choice in his fruit."

"Pity it is," said Blanch, "he hath not bestowed some of his substance upon a schoolmaster."

"Oh! thy cousin is mal-adroit, I grant ye; but not unschooled in learning. Nigel was boarded at Winchester for some two years, Master Godolphin. Say thy Latin grace, Nigel,—thou hast not forgot it?"

"I taught it him," said Nigel, pointing to a paroquet, which sat in one corner of the apartment; "wilt thou, aunty, that he should help me?—Poll! pretty Poll!—"

"—Fie on thee, Nigel! His father,

Godolphin, was knight of the
wouldst thou credit it? His mo-
not but that ancestry is a vain
is descended in the line from Ros-
squire of the body to Edward the
mercy on us!" added the good lady,
herself as she arose from table,
at have no home, have little right
ember such things;—we may be
not proud. Nigel! light Master
hin adown this passage," she add-
ing Godolphin about to retire.
patience, boy!—thou of no degree,
run first; fall back, and follow
etters."

ou said, anon, I was of such an-
as, I am sure, Master Godolphin
not," said the youth, shrewdly, and,
g forward—for he was very obsti-
-first down the passage.

respectful "good night" closed the
ardness of the scene, for Mr. Godol-
was too courtly, even to see the
nliness of Lady Arundel's kinsman.
ps he was too happy; for, before
is joined to calculation, its day-

dreams are mighty pleasant incidents in life's journey; and thus passed many nights; thus were many suppers enjoyed and concluded. Imprisonment, except for the thoughts of the absent, sat lightly on the spirits of the ladies of Arundel; even Cecily, reassured by occasional tidings of her sons, grew cheerful; Lady Arundel's buoyant nature rallied entirely; Blanch was but too, too happy; nor did it occur to her fond relatives, that they were placing the betrothed young lady in a situation fatal to her peace of mind.

CHAPTER VIII.

place should first be high, on pleasant gladsome
greene,
under shade of stately trees, where little sunne is
scene :

near some fountaine spring, whose chrystall running
streames

help to coole the parching heate, yeaught by Phœ-
bus' beames.

Book of Hunting, by GASCOIGNE and TURBERVILLE.

WHILST affairs were going on thus at
e, peaceful pursuits still prevailed
ne parts of the country, and a sense
curity — not the least beneficial re-
f a settled government — gladdened
earts of the dwellers in those, as
avoured districts.

e inhabitants of Compton Winyates,
e seat of a loyal family, in Warwick-
—were awakened, one bright October

morning, just at dawn, by the lively sounds of the bugles — a signal, at which forth stepped into the open court before the house a gay youth, our friend Edward Herbert, in Kendal green, for whose accommodation a fleet blood-horse, neighing and prancing, was held by one of the grooms, who waited close to the majestic stables — for stables were not, in those days, planted out of sight, — which stood near to the house.

“Are the ragged Robins ready?” asked the youth, addressing one of the yeoman-keepers,—a body of retainers of the House of Compton, who, for a small annual sum, made their appearance, in the livery of the family, with a badge upon their arms, a buckler on their shoulders, and a burnished broad sword hanging from their belts.

“Yes, your honour!” was the ready reply, in as good broad Warwickshire as ever met the ears of Shakspeare — “the chaps are ready;”—and, as he spoke, about a dozen of men, dressed like their betters in Kendal green, with bugles and hang-

their sides, and quarter-staffs in hands, came forth leading the slow or brachets, by which the deer be roused; whilst a number of s followed with greyhounds led in for the purpose of leveling down e.

all be back ere sun-set, and — e that there be good cheer for sts — should any follow me from d!" — said the young man, addressing the groom; "and, Will," — he in a lower tone, to a servant of a r. class — "mind that the letter otst of, goes by a special hand. thinkest it like that it will reach ur on the third day?" he added, somewhat wistfully into the man's

ery like, Master Edward."

ve him a crown, — to make speed; ll him, if my letter miscarry he ide *there* for a time," cried the man, as he rode off, pointing with tt-end of his whip to a round mas-building, used by way of a watch-

house, or temporary prison for troublesome retainers. The youth was preceded by the yeoman-keepers, and ragged Robins, — as their attendants were called; next came a troop of pages and squires in hunting garbs, armed with spears and long cross-bows; some were on foot, some on horseback; lastly, the heir of Compton, without any friends, without the company of ladies, who often, in those days, graced, or *disgraced*, the field.

The young man rode up a gentle ascent with an absent air, as if following a duty rather than a pleasure; and once he looked back at the house of Compton Win-yates. It was a building of exquisite proportions, and of ornate architecture, erected in the days of the Tudor monarchs—one of whom, Henry the Eighth, had honoured it with his presence. A projecting porch, with the arms of the family above the door-way, corresponded in its pyramidal battlements with the rest of the mansion, with this only peculiarity, that at one end rose a gable, succeeded by a

wer. Above rose chimneys of that
er which seems to have been at its
during the reign of Henry the
h,—zig-zag, or with twisted stems ;
ll preserving a harmony with the
fabric. Backed by dark woods,
rose upon the Edge Hills, in the
of which Compton Winyates is
there was, even at this period,
Compton was the chief residence
loyal Spencer Compton, Earl of
mpton, an air of deep seclusion—
of monastic retirement—around the
use, which had at that time wit-
many changes, and been inhabited
y succeeding generations. It was
omed in hills—some, grassy downs,
clothed with the rich foliage of the
unty in which—proverbially retired
mpton in the Hollow, as old Camden
it, was securely planted.

hing but a bridle road, and that
y kept up, led from the vale in
the house is situated, to the higher
l, beyond which a noble chase, run-
nto the famous vale of the Red

Horse, formed the object to which young Edward and his attendants were veering. Once the young man halted ; and his eye rested upon the waving, autumn-tinted trees of the pleasaunce, seated to the south of the house, beneath a terrace of noble breadth, over which the hill above slightly projected. Some moving objects in the front court now gave life to the scene ; and the blue smoke rose curling above the dark woods which frowned upon the hollow, —else—and Edward thought so, at that moment—the lonely and now seldom-inhabited old house had a character of melancholy and desertion almost oppressive ; and the more so, that the county in which it is seated was then all commotion and disaffection. Warwick, Kenilworth, Banbury, were in the hands of the Parliament ; and Compton Winyates, unprotected as it seemed—for many of the usual garrison were with the Lord Northampton—was solitary and even forlorn in loyal tranquillity.

But in a few moments all staid reflection was at an end, and the chase—that

icating pursuit absorbed every fa-

Scarcely had three long blasts, notes, sounded from the horn, than tract hounds were uncoupled, the was let loose by the keepers, and at full speed, galloped the yeomen-ers with their ragged Robins, the ers, the pages, the squires: away young Herbert himself, preceded by ger party—not now to be even re-erred by the old—of rustics with long clearing hedges and ditches, and ng to great distances; for the en-ts of the poor and rich were, in t days, commingled.

e system of killing game in inclo- had long since been disused; and wiftness of the steed gained the -much to the disgust of those of the chool—in lieu of the steady-paced r. Away bounded the stag,—away ped the gay steeds, traversing the and hilly country. The laughing above them, below an unimpeded of green-sward;—youth, high spirits, gth, courage, gave zest to the sport,

—gay was it ! The rustic people of Tysoe—the nearest village to Compton—ran out to admire : whilst the stag, traversing the country, formed at every turn a picture which riveted even the unlettered herd,—using, poor wretch ! every vain manœuvre and effort which his poor instinct could suggest,—his mouth whitened with foam, exhausted, breathless,—even shedding tears. And, thus pursued, he ran—but entered cover just as the village church of Pillerton became visible to his pursuers—below Edge-Hill.

The slow hounds and prickers were sent in, under cover of a thick wood, to drive the panting animal from his retreat, and the huntsman was about to offer his knife, an idle compliment, to the master of the chase ; and the shrill notes of the *treble mort* were sounded ;—the shouts of the men, and the yelping of the dogs rang over the field, when a sight suddenly checked the chief actors in this sylvan tragedy. Towards them, at no great distance, rode a troop of horse—gallant dragoons, gaily caparisoned, manifestly for

tion. They halted at some distance, and, from the head of their company, there came forward two horsemen, manifestly, in armour; the one mounted on a gay and curveting cream-coloured horse, the other on a black horse, and a friendly "good day," announced that the strangers, whoever they were, were not hostile to the family to which the household, by their badges, it was evident that the hunting party belonged. "You have had good sport, though I have not," said the gentleman on the cream-coloured horse, addressing Edward. "You have had passable good sport, better than I can recollect of some years since, when some of these men of these parts, whereof I was one, saw the stag plunged into a stream here hereabouts, and divers of us followed, and stood with swords drawn, to cut at him, on his coming out of the water. It was at this very place; it was nigh to Compton, methinks," said the stranger, breaking off his narrative, and turning to his companion.

“—At Fenny Compton, sir;” answered the other gentleman, who was bare-headed, with deep respect.

“Possibly!—We all stood with our swords drawn to have a cut at him on his coming out of the water. The stream at that place being wonderfully fierce and dangerous, made us youths the more eager to be at him. But he escaped us.” The speaker paused for a few moments, and his mild glance passed from the immediate scene over the adjacent country. The party were now on the brow of Edge-Hill; a thicket, under which the stag had taken refuge, clothed its sides; below lay a verdant region, then unclosed, save where patches around a farstead, or meadows dotted with sheep, and geese, denoted that the valley of the River Horse was, as yet, free from the ravages of the though advancing, power of the military invaders: whilst here and there an embattled church tower, with its gilded fanes, told to the mind’s eye a history of peaceful and protected population, whose simple annals had, as yet, never

registered deeds of blood and scenes
by.

attention of Edward Herbert was
by the expression of the strang-
tenance. It was that of a man
dle age, and, evidently, in the
ranks of life; for the indefinable
e of good breeding marked the
—for such he manifestly was—as
whose mind had held communion
with the refined, and whose man-
ad been formed among the vir-
great. Yet his deportment was
umble,—nature had not fashioned
n the mould of nobility. His
was of the usual height, but he
w on horseback; his features were
e and pleasing, not elevated, nor
r, and, had it not been for the fine
val form of his face, and for the
ar beauty and sweetness of his
a, and had not a peculiar melancholy,
ut moroseness, imparted an interest
e soft, long, hazel eyes which now
upon fair Warwickshire, a calm,
critical observer might have con-

demned any pretensions to beauty in the cavalier.

The stranger again spoke first,—for Edward was over-awed, he knew not wherefore, by the interview.

“You know this country well? Tell me, what are those towers faintly marked in the horizon—one taller than t’other—that I spy to the right yonder, as far as eye can reach—say?”

“It is Warwick,” answered the young man proudly, “—the castle of Warwick, the tower you see is Guy, the lesser but not less strong, is Cæsar: in the centre, there—that small point high above the others—’tis the Maiden Tower; to the left the Tower of St. Mary rises higher still,”—the youth crossed himself as he spoke, the gesture was not lost upon the stranger. “But, — and of course you know,” added the youth dejectedly, “’tis garrisoned by traitors and malignants.”

“Traitors and malignants! know you to whom you are speaking? perchance we are of that faction, as, in thy zeal, young man, you doubtless call the Parliament leaders.”

"I think not," returned Edward care-
lessly. "I believe I am speaking to cavaliers
at all events, I am addressing
to *gentlemen*, who will not ask
me to betray a harmless sportsman
here. I conceit not, at all events ;
nought in the world."

"I should so suppose," the stranger
glancing at his companion—a stiff-
hard-featured Scottishman, as his
features betrayed—who looked as if he
could scarce descend to the levity of a

"And there, sir," resumed Edward,
"I feel by that pleasure which one, to
certain haunts have been familiar
with, loves, feels in gratifying a curiosity
which is delightful to him in others,—"
"is it,—at the foot of Edge-Hill, and
on—'tis above Pillerton that the
old people have carved the figure of
a knight in the red soil—observe, sir, its co-
lour and richness, and hence that part
of the vale hath its name, not inappropri-
ately. Should any deeds of valour or chivalry
be performed nigh unto it."

“ And beyond, to the north-east, a hill indifferently wooded, and almost the only natural rise in this long flat that I can scan—what is that called ? ”

“ Shugbury, where they find the star stones, which, indeed, the lords of that manor have taken into their coat-armour. There’s Southam; and beyond are salt-springs, that the common people do resort to, in a hamlet hard by, by which runneth the Leame.”

“ You seem well acquainted with these parts,” said the stranger, turning his horse round: “ and, behold ! your pursuivants and yeomen have deserted you ; they are eager to carry home their prey—you seem to show little relish for the sport ! ”

“ I would fain mingle in other matters,” replied the youth, in a sorrowful tone: “ I would fain mingle in real wars.”

“ And wherefore not ? ” asked the stranger, looking at the handsome face and noble figure of the youth, with evident admiration and good will.

“ I am under tutelage as yet, and ordered to travel. Nay, more ! since you

cavalier, and, as I take it, an officer, as you will help me to the best way of serving the King's service as a volunteer under Rupert, if ye can" — said the first, without ceremony, turning from the gentleman to the other: "for I like ye."

"But, an if you are so disposed — and in these days," said the Scottish man, with the twang of his country, "ye languish for lack of field exercise, ye have no tenantry to muster? — no money to support thee? — no inheritance to maintain a troop?"

"Ask ye, James!" exclaimed the other, laughing. "Thou canny Scot" — "I am of nonage," answered the youth, "in his vexation, the furze and heath with his long hunting-whip. "My father liveth hard by — that is, that he I know not, for he was in Staffordshire yesterday se'nnight; where I would have been too."

The party had by this time crossed the ridge of Edge-Hill, and were riding upon the high ridge, from which thirty miles

of country could be distinctly seen. The strangers now stopped, looked back, and parleyed long together—the party of horse keeping in the distance. After some moments, however, they resumed their course.

“Our ways are scarcely the same,” rejoined the Cavalier on the cream-coloured horse; “our party return to Keinton;—you to—”

“—Compton Winyates,” answered the young man; “where my kinsman and guardian, Lord Northampton, would be proud that I should offer to ye both such poor entertainment as I may.”

“I know Spencer Compton,” observed the stranger;—“one of our—a brave man and a faithful friend!” he added, with enthusiasm; “he hath embarked a large fortune in the King’s cause; would it had been with better success!”

“This,” said the youth, as the party now put their horses into a quicker pace, “was once a wild moorland; my lord’s father enclosed it into a park. The part of the park we are riding over

and Compton Pike, and we shall come to Compton Winyates."

He spoke, the party whom he condescended a gentle slope, and, as turned, Compton Winyates, in all its beauty, rose before their view.

The strangers halted, evidently surprised.

"Who," said the Cavalier on his bay-coloured steed, "could ever expect to see such a house in so sequestered a spot?"

"It is a fair scene,—and I trust that these good arms, to be preserved in the hands of their possessors. Young strangers, we bid you farewell, for our affairs call us to Keinton. If ever I could put into effect your wish, to have a volunteer into the service of the monarch, I think," and the Cavalier smiled as he spoke, "I can come with you to the King. Can I not, sir?"

"Sir!" cried the young man, "say the word, and I will raise a troop to your service. My name," he added, "is Herbert; Poole Castle my home. Speak but for me to the King,

that I may see some service;—I have lands and tenants—and wealth; would I were twenty-one!”

“I *will* commend you to the King,” replied the stranger. He hesitated,—then looked around him cautiously—then upon the youth. “Thou hast a visage that I like. Wouldst thou receive the commission here?” He smiled, and waved his hand to the youth; but galloped down the hill as he had finished speaking. Edward Herbert rode after the stranger, breathless and agitated.

The Cavalier was gazing intently upon the home of the Comptons. His gaze had something mournful in it; his eyes were even moistened with tears, but he dashed them away.

“I was seeking,” he said calmly, “for the arms of the Tudors upon that porch. They are within that spandrel; the griffin and dog supporters. It is a fine spot; would that its owner could have returned to it in safety!”

“Sir,” said the Scottish attendant, “why dwell upon sad thoughts?”

—He would have been the first to
marched to us.—Young man, didst
honour thy guardian?" resumed the
er, without heeding his friend.

did! — I do!" cried Edward,
ng himself from his horse and
ng on the green-sward! "Is it
yal master who speaketh to me
—is it, as I guess, the sovereign
se realms to whom I bow, not
on my bended knee, but in heart
irit?"

A shrewd guess, is it not, James?"
the stranger. He extended his
with a kind smile.—"Thou hast
ered our secret. Dare I trust thee
nother?"

I betray it," Edward began—
o asseverations! I can believe thy
say. Thy name is Herbert, of
Castle. Thy lineage, then, I know.
not afraid.—I repeat my question:
man, Didst thou honour thy guar-

did, in troth!"
thou mayst say *did*; for the news

hath not yet reached his home! The earl is slain!" The King made a solemn pause. When he resumed his discourse, his voice was low and broken.—"He was slain, not many days ago, at Hopton Heath. So,"—added the King, with a deep emphasis, "thou art out of thy tutelage. It will not be long, young man, ere these peaceful fields will echo, perchance, with heavy sounds—an action is not improbable. Remember, though but an infant in law, thou art a man in strength."

"I will not forget it!" exclaimed Edward Herbert, passionately. Ere he could arise from his kneeling posture, the King had turned from him, and was riding briskly up the Hill. Edward watched the receding figure with the devotion of idolatry;—gradually it disappeared, and the soldiers of the body-guard, which had advanced towards the hollow, one by one, vanished.

Then the youth collected his surprised senses; he looked around him; he was virtually the representative of the absent,

lead. Ere noon next day, train-
of the scattered tenantry were
in the courts of Compton Win-
d the retainers of the lost lord,
moned to avenge his death. At
cost, a troop of horse was raised
rd, and, from henceforth, he had
ite for fighting fully and honour-
d.

CHAPTER IX.

Mel. Enough, enough ! the world shall henceforth witness
My thankfulness to Heaven, and those people
Who have been pitiful to me and mine.
Lend me a looking-glass !—How now ? How came I
So courtly, in fresh raiments ?

Rhe. Here 's the glass, sir.

Mel. I 'm in the trim, too. Oh, Cleleophila,
This was the goodness of thy care and cunning.

Lover's Melancholy. FORD.

WHAT a day-dream is the beginning of love's fever ! To what an oblivion is the remote past consigned ! How worthless seems the future to the enamoured heart ! For it is the only condition in which the present suffices to our craving and insatiate longing for happiness. We tremble lest the moments fly too fast ; we covet every second of those hours in which the presence of one object, even if we look not, speak not, to the idol,

s and endears beyond all expres-

s day-dream—in that delusive state
ends the future to our wishes, and
tes the loathed past—Blanch passed
od of her sojourn at Frome. She
hough no others did, that her feel-
ere more than shared by Sidney
hin; she saw the absorbing inte-
e delicate, yet ardent, devotion,
she inspired in that most ami-
ut, as it proved, most unfortunate,
gs.

e were moments when Blanch se-
reproached herself for not con-
in the best of aunts—the truest
nds—the first serious feeling that
er occupied her young heart; the
motions that had arrested the buoy-
of youth; seizing on her mental
s, as the frost arrests the spray on
reamlet; stilling, but to render
ore and more beautiful. There
moments when she remembered Mr.
ert with a shudder, and mentally
ed, that, as soon as she knew the

address and position of her betrothed she would write to him, and, releasing him from his contract, entreat that she might be free. There were moments when intensity of suffering was her portion, and she reflected, but reflected in vain, that Mr. Godolphin was a heretic and a republican; that to bind her fast to him she must give up every tie, human and divine, that had hitherto bound her on earth, and guided her to heaven. But—and there are many that will believe the assertion—these considerations so affecting, so serious, nay, so awful melted away beneath the supreme influence of a passion, felt as it is only for once—and felt at that period of life when reason, ill-matured, and even religion rather belonging to impulse than affection, are powerless to save from those rash resolves, which form a moral self-destruction.

It was the most unfortunate, but the happiest, period of poor Blanch's early days. To know that the noblest intellect was bowed down sometimes to amuse,—

es to instruct, her ; to feel but
ure that the kindest heart beat
quicker throb at every gentle ac-
hers ; to view the influence of her
wishes, even opinions upon a mind
ured and cultivated, that Blanch
expressed — that no common con-
could ever again interest her ;
were dazzling and dangerous at-
s to a woman, had she been
d merely with vanity, putting feel-
of the question. Day by day this
and ill-fated attachment grew on
ides—on both sides it was the first,
, the last, sentiment of that kind ;
ay by day, the dread of separation
e stronger in the mind of Blanch.
odolphin saw only obstacles to their
ng again ; he knew not, that there
an insurmountable impediment to
ever being united. Still, whilst
in of each other's sentiments, no
, no expression of direct acknow-
ment passed between Blanch and
olphin. I know not but that the
ion was more intense, the sentiment

dearer for that silence. Avowed attachments often disappoint; the happiness does not seem commensurate with the previous expectation; but the untold love, subsequently hopeless, is dwelt upon by the bereaved heart with a fondness which owes something to uncertainty. Enough of this; for, if I expatiate more, there will be an array of fathers, a corps of maternal aunts, a regiment of speculating mothers ranged in order of battle against me, and against my spiritual bantlings of the quill.

One morning, after matins had been said by a priest who was now permitted to visit Lady Arundel, the cousins had an unusual indulgence. It was Blanch's birth-day; she had attained her eighteenth year; and Mr. Godolphin came hastily into the chamber where she and her relations sat.

"The day is bright," he said, smiling as he looked at Lady Cecily; "the town is quiet; there is no rumour of forces nearer to us than Shaftesbury: will you venture, under my care, upon the ramparts? I

myself, madam," addressing Lady Arundel, "that not for an instant will I leave you in my charge."

"Then, you dread no insult to my children? No loud cries—no low murmurs—such as we experienced in coming to Ragland?" asked Lady Arundel earnestly.

"No; the guard is doubled, by my order; and the populace are gone into the country to the sheep-shearing."

"But," remonstrated Lady Arundel, "looking at the worn attire of Cecily and her children;—we are prisoners 'tis true; but, I cannot bear that my children should be treated thus."

Godolphin smiled, and hesitated. "I need no ornament," he said, courteously; "but, heard ye not of the arrival of Lord Wardour yester-even? Coffers, long expected, with the accustomed habili-ments are arrived. Your ladyship's was of great value for the covetous Hun-gham to let it go without a struggle. We have had a fierce controversy, by which, but certain reasons prevailed: and, the coffers, came—what doth your ladyship most wish for?"

Lady Arundel shook her head. "Ask the imprisoned wife, the mother, who—but I must not think of my own sorrows. After my own family, and my tried friends I have always most valued my faithful servants. *They* are friends. Ah! disparage them who will, they perform for us, in seasons of peril, offices of kindness which we should think it hard to do for them. Let me not call to mind my poor servants; it is too painful; I dare not wonder where they are. There was a time, Mr. Godolphin, when I was surrounded by faithful hearts. Many blessings for me! May God reward them!"

"Brought the waggoner any tidings of poor Michael," asked Blanch, "or of Margery,—or—"

Mr. Godolphin looked at her steadily and fondly. "You have not had your wish," he whispered, as he bent over her chair. "Is it for flowers?—here are roses. What says the old ballad?

"My Rosamond, my only rose,
That pleasest best mine eye,
The fairest flower in all the world,
To feed my fantasy ;

The flower of my afflicted heart,
Whose sweetness doth excel."

der," cried Blanch, abashed by
k with which these words were
ed to her. Yet she took the

"Poetry is all very well for the
but for us, Mr. Godolphin, it were
ous pastime ;—but he has vanish-
me, Cecily, let us wrap our mufflers
s and go out, and look towards
ster, and let us bring home some
ent to gladden the heart of our

Where! where can Mr. Godol-
e gone?" cried Blanch, impatient
promised enjoyment.

door opened at this moment. Men
heavy caskets, which the ladies
cognised, came in and withdrew.
uge chests were then introduced,
e the surprise and delight of the
s were exhausted, another lost
was restored to them.

and humbled, and tearful, old
y—Lady Cecily's nurse ; the nurse
ard, and of Claude ; the friend of
whom she served — sank at Lady

Arundel's feet. Lady Arundel was moved with joy. Cecily's feelings were exhausted in sobs. Blanch turned to Mr. Godolphin and, looking at him, and speaking to him in a manner that he could never forget, said, "This is your doing."

"Do you suppose," whispered Mr. Godolphin, drawing near to her, "that an effort of mine to make you, and the person whom I respect and esteem happy could be omitted? But are you disposed to view the fortifications—I cannot promise you a long ramble."

"Let my children," said Lady Arundel, "with Margery for their tiring-woman, retire, and take out their wearing apparel; then, Master Godolphin, you may,—but I will not boast."

"And now, Margery," cried Lady Arundel, as Godolphin, taking her ladyship's hint, retired, "tell me all about Wardour." Her voice faltered as she added, "Have they quite sacked the place?"

"Not worse than it weren," was Margery's consoling reply; but she added a catalogue of injuries done, and of damages

d by repairs worse than the in-
-how the horse, kine, and sheep in
ome Farm had been driven to Sa-
fair and sold there; how the fish-
had been dragged, and not a brace
p left in them; how the parks
deer had been wantonly destroy-
-forever, how the leaden pipe which
ought water to the castle, had
ut up and sold, as the goodwives
sell bone lace at sixpence the
“For the Roundheads have left
g in earth, air, or water,” observed
y; “even the poor rooks have been
r sport”—the poor domestic, an-
ookery, part and parcel of old War-
was “instinct with life” no more.
t I saved one treasure—I did save
dded Margery, looking at Blanch.
a, Mistress Blanch—Ah, I reckon
had many a sorry heart about it.
n’t thy best carcanet of pearls—nor
y ear-drops—nor the diamond *solli-*
nor them loops of pink pearl—it
omething more precious than all
- Master Herbert’s own pictur!

blazing with dimonds.—What a pity that kind gentleman warn't here to see it!"

Whilst Margery spoke, she drew near to Blanch—and, looking round at Lady Arundel, — "She 's ashamed," Margery observed, "at our talking of her own true love—put it by—where it should be, Mistress Blanch.—Ay! she left it under her toilet-glass. My lady clean forgot it. Now, what will you say to Margery, Mistress Blanch, and my service to you?"

Blanch took the picture from Margery's hand hastily—and, without glancing at the portrait, buried it in the bodice of her dress. "Don't talk to me, Margery," she said mournfully, "about Wardour."—Her conscience smote her, and she turned to pull out garment after garment from the largest and fullest chest.

By Margery's account, Mr. Godolphin must have paid a large sum to ransom the clothes and jewels from the hands of the Philistines; and the gratitude of the ladies grew more and more vociferous every habiliment that they pulled out. They could not dress; the delight of see-

articles of habitual comfort, and
ditional splendour, the happiness of
Margery to sympathize in their
le the business of the toilet a very
e indeed.

ur tawny velvet, aunt!" cried
as she drew out a magnificent
one of that race which could stand
s the saying is—"Lace ruffles, dia-
glets, and all—charming! charm-
Godolphin."

ur tippet of sables, madam!" ex-
Cecily, examining another chest.
a friend, indeed!"

our ladyship's white satin coat, faced
mbroidery—a very goodly dress.
ow poor Lettice would rejoice to
day!" observed Margery.

ettice is purblind. So that I knew
be well-cared for, and contented,
d rather have thee with two eyes,
ry," answered Lady Arundel.

rgery curtseyed low, very low indeed.
onour was so great, she could hardly
p from her curtsey without falling
agitation.

“The jewels (best of men!) are safe—all here, dear mother,” resumed careful Cecily, after an examination of coffers. “This coronet — ah, mad how oft have you told us of that gay splendid scene when our poor king, blessed majesty—may God preserve him and they who fight for him ——”

“Close the casket, my Cecily,” answered Lady Arundel gravely. “Well the jewels have been spared to them they may buy us bread.”

There was a solemn, almost proper solemnity in Lady Arundel’s voice; it was some time ere her children spoke to her again.

“You will dress to-day, mother, to content your aged niece—eighteen to-day, eighteen, Margery!—my birthday!—to please—to please Mr. Godolphin, who has brought us back our bravery!”

“If it will make thee happier, child,” was Lady Arundel’s kind, but firm reply, “I will, ere supper-time, seek to look gay. Meantime, leave Margery and me to discourse of past times.

were best, in this rude age—for I
warn me of a certain rough captain
seen loitering in the courts—that
fair daughters, be not too seemly
ye go abroad. Content ye—don
dare when ye come back from the
courts—and take your mufflers now.”
happy to be once more free to
breathe the fresh air, Lady Cecily and
joyfully assented. They cast their
arms around them, to hide the worn
soiled dresses which they had been
obliged to retain ever since their depar-
ture from Wardour. Their heads were
covered by black taffeta hoods; but nei-
ther cloak nor muffler could diminish the
beauty and grace of Cecily’s tall figure,
nor conceal the airy elegance of the too,
happy Blanch.

Mr. Godolphin, sumptuously attired,
was waiting for them in the ante-chamber.
One of his servants, in mantles garded
with gold lace, yet well armed, attended
behind the ladies; Mr. Godolphin
respectfully handing Lady Cecily across
the courtyard.

The party turned down a narrow passage, and presently stood upon the broad strong wall surrounding the town. There was a firm terrace on the top of it; and sentinels walked at stated distances. Cannon were planted, and a deep moat ran all round the town. The cousins, so long immured, looked wistfully upon the rich and undulating meadows which stretched in every direction. The verdure of the trees, the songs of the birds, brought tears into the eyes of Cecily.

"I hope my children are glad to-day!" was her touching exclamation. "Do you think, sir, they are permitted to enjoy the blessed air?—*They* are not prisoners surely!—What harm can the little ones do?"

Her anxious, appealing look found its way to the heart of one who never saw distress without seeking to relieve the unhappy. But Mr. Godolphin knew too well the stern nature of those who were engaged in the deadly contest, to be very sanguine that the poor children would taste the indulgences, or even any portion

indulgences, to which they had accustomed. He answered only—
“were well this day se’nnight,
the last messenger rode hither.”
He pointed out the direction in which
the master lay.

“Well!” repeated Cecily, “well!—
I think, they must be happy! Even
I can bear many things with firmness
in my years. Claude is more tender-
hearted. Mr. Godolphin, do not chide
me, for I cannot stand here—I cannot
go towards the spot where they are
—such a longing, yearning—” She
went on, and the rest of the sentence
came in sighs.

“Do not make your cousin sad,” said Mr.
Godolphin, after walking some time; for,
in the course of his observations upon the
conduct which he had witnessed in the
family, he had remarked that the
effort to rouse any one of them from
inaction was to represent that such de-
votion gave pain to others. Such was
the variable character of the Arundel
family, such their mutual affection.

"I would not do so," replied Cecily—
"I will not do so. Blanch, poor Blanch—it is her birthday. Blanch, though so jocund, feels as deeply as others," observed the Lady Cecily to Mr. Godolphin aside. "She chid Margery to-day for talking to her of Wardour."

"And why?—she often talks to me of Wardour," answered Mr. Godolphin rather suddenly.

"But, then, you are a stranger, and know not everything—not all that poor Blanch has suffered, may suffer." Lady Cecily looked up at Mr. Godolphin as she spoke—his countenance was confused and serious.

One half-hour's walk upon the ramparts was all that could be allowed to the captives, even by their kind gaoler. They were contented and thankful, but weary.

"I," said Blanch, "who used to scamper along the home-park—then up the downs—then to the grange, and say I knew no fatigue, am now fairly glad to sit down on this great gun—this very gun, which is fated to destroy, perchance, my kindred."

ated herself on a cannon, which was
aded, as she spoke. "Kind Mr.
hin, let me take one more look
trees and fields before I go within
I cannot go away yet."

words, "kind Mr. Godolphin" had
ic influence. Never did gaoler
y his prisoner with feelings of more
nderness, compassion, and respect,
Mr. Godolphin entertained towards
tives.

ch threw back her muffler; and
nglets were blown from her fore-
and her clear, but now pale, skin
nted, for a moment or two, with
ghtest hue. Mr. Godolphin's eyes
ixed upon her beautiful counte-
when she turned an eloquent look
im.

shall never forget *this* birthday,"
id, in a low tone. "If you are
d to leave us, and should you be
m us on this day next year, think
-think of me at noon-time, and
his scene."

Godolphin did not speak in re-

ply; but his silence was not devoid of one kind of language.

"I must go to our prison now," said Blanch, after a pause, rising. "I fear," she added, with sudden haste, "lest your kindness should bring some ill-fortune to you."

"See — wait an instant!" cried Mr. Godolphin, laying his hand on hers to arrest her departure from the ramparts. "You have dropped something very bright and glistening — a picture," he added, looking for an instant at the portrait of Mr. Herbert, which had fallen from Blanch's dress; he started back; he placed the miniature in Blanch's extended hand. Their eyes met, and the confusion and dismay in Blanch's countenance astonished Mr. Godolphin, and filled his mind with painful suspicions. "Will you let me look at that picture again?" he said, following the silent Blanch into the court-yard. "I fancy—I am sure I have seen those features before."

"What features?" answered Blanch, in much confusion. "Oh, Margery, Mar-

she muttered to herself. "Woe be for this!" She walked quickly to the ante-chamber without another word to Mr. Godolphin, and turning into a small light closet, she there sat down, closed the door, and fell into a reverie. Conscience pointed out to her what she ought to do. Was it right to pursue. Could she base a part as to conceal from the world, she well knew—as well as if she had declared it to her—deeply loved man, that she was betrothed, irrevocably? Not irrevocably—for a convent should be her refuge ere she would become the wife of Edward Herbert. What a reward for disinterested kindness, to receive the homage of such a heart, and to give it with deception! The disposition of Blanch was naturally sincere, and, brought up in the extreme of indulgence, she had hitherto had little temptation to dissimulation. She blushed at her career during the last six or seven weeks. When Mr. Herbert, — he was her kinsman—her playmate when a child—now affianced husband. He had quitted

Wardour under the full conviction that after an absence of two years, he should return to claim her promised hand. Blanch had herself signed the pre-contract which gave him that privilege. She had signed it, and she shrank from violating her promise. Brought up in a high sense of duty that which was due to her name and family; the fine-spirited girl determined even at the expense of happiness, not to sully that race to which she belonged by a clandestine attachment; not to wound the respectability of those who had lost all save character, by a dishonourable line of conduct — dishonourable equally towards her intended husband, and towards the loved object of every thought and hope.

“I am eighteen years of age,” thus Blanch reflected. “I am responsible for my own actions. Mother of Jesus! thou who canst guide me, save me from error!”

She fell upon her knees, and when a prayer was uttered, arose, to her own fancy, strengthened in her purpose.

The first impulse was to seek an in-

w with Sidney Godolphin, and to
m of her circumstances. Yet what
had he to claim such confidence?
could Blanch presume to suppose
one who had never made proposals
e, could be affected by what she
l reveal? She remembered that
g but implied attachment had ex-
she reflected that she could not,
t risk of injuring the modesty of
ex, venture to open such a subject
Godolphin. She then deliberated
er to consult her aunt and cousin
difficulties. For this she wanted
tion. Sidney Godolphin was their
friend, sole comfort, stay, hope.
would be the consequences of her
ure? Lady Arundel, devotedly at-
to the Herbert family, solicitous
eir alliance, partial to Edward Her-
would, whatever it might cost her,
Godolphin from her presence; Ce-
utiful and discreet, would speak of
o more. Absence, with all its anti-
d horrors, must soon arrive. To ab-
would succeed a forced oblivion of

that brief acquaintance with the accomplished rebel.

"I must wait," was Blanch's decision. "If I cannot conquer myself, I must then have recourse to others. If I cannot act with firmness, I must throw myself on those who can. Until I am released—until Mr. Herbert gives me back my contract—never, never, shall one fond expression, one look that worlds might not witness, escape me. No," and she drew the picture from her bosom, and looked at it whilst tears filled her eyes. "Edward, we are cousins; I will not disgrace our name; I will not let the rebels have it to say, that a Somerset broke her vow. For the rest, let me humbly hope,"—and she clasped her hands across her brow; "that a bitter sacrifice may not be required of me. I can never unite myself to Godolphin, unless, indeed, miracles change his heart; but I may love him to the last."

It was long before Blanch found resolution to join her aunt and cousin, and to receive their congratulations upon the

in her appearance, which the arrival of the chests from Wardour had enabled her to make. The softness and beauty which her imprisonment had, in a degree, caused, detracted not from the attractiveness of Blanch. In spite of all reflections, she found it impossible, even under the renovating hands of the dressmaker, not to be excited by the return of her old habits, and old associations, which were strongly coupled with dress than with any other idea.

At length, after many comments on the part of Margery, in a dress of brocaded silk, of a light blue, after the fashion adopted by Lucy, Countess of Carlisle, with loose sleeves, and draped up over the arm, Blanch descended from her chamber. It was the intention to disguise the lower part of the dress by heavy masses of cumbrous drapery. As to this error the ladies of Arundel were no less prone than others. Perhaps in the blameless court of Charles the First it was thought more becoming to the lower classes that ladies should be so

dressed as to be rendered quite incapable when in full costume, of active exertion. It may have been so ; and indeed it seems almost impossible that they should have ever run, or even walked quickly, whilst wearing the flowing garments of that period.

But, if the lightness of the figure were destroyed by the mode adopted, the face and throat were shown to peculiar advantage. The hair fell in beautiful ringlets on the cheeks of Blanch, heightened in their colour, whilst one long and dark curl hung on her fair neck. A large bunch of natural flowers, placed on the left side of her head, formed the appropriate ornament of youth ; a row of stringed pearls showed to advantage the rounded throat. The gown was modestly drawn over her shoulders, and adorned in the front by a knot of white ribbon ; double ear-drops,—for without these appendages ladies were incomplete,—and a spray of pearls on the stomacher of her gown, formed Blanch's sole ornaments.

As she approached the room when

Arundel and her cousin sat, sounds of merry music quickened her steps. Godolphin was with her aunt; and, in the garden, a band of minstrels had been summoned at his will to give somewhat of a festive character to Blanch's birthday. They played indifferently; but to be long debarred from the luxury of music, even the rough sounds of the bagpipe or organ are welcome; to the secluded lady the enjoyment was in no small degree.

"What!" cried Lady Arundel, as the musicians stopped to rest themselves, and she, in silence, seated herself near the fountain, "not a word to throw at us, my niece? Not a syllable of thanks to Mr. Godolphin for his courtesy?—But—What a soft cadence!"

The musicians now struck up a lively air, and Mr. Godolphin took advantage of the confusion which best favours whistling lovers and gossiping age, and drew near to Blanch.

"I would rather that you said something sharp and saucy to me, than no-

thing," he observed, stooping down to address her.

"I thank you for your compliment; is not that enough?" returned Blanch averting her head.

Mr. Godolphin made no reply. "Blanch is capricious," was his secret reflection; "but can I expect her to be faultless?" At any rate, faultless or not faultless, Godolphin was no longer able to ponder upon her good or bad qualities with the coolness of a sage.

Ere twilight had been succeeded by night, the minstrels, amply, though secretly, rewarded by Godolphin, departed. Yet still Blanch sat by the open lattice; still Godolphin stood near her.

It was a spacious room in which they were, Lady Arundel and Cecily were conversing at the other end. They heeded not the abstracted couple who were all in all to each other.

After standing long near her, Mr. Godolphin sat down by Blanch. He watched her up-raised countenance as her eyes were mournfully fixed upon the silent

He saw an unaccountable change
er; he hoped, he could not but
at it proceeded from that sudden,
first, painful, consciousness, which
girl feels when for the first time
ws herself to be beloved.
onged to bring the conversation
the picture; but, whenever he
to their morning's walk, Blanch
so perceptibly from the theme,
who would rather have suffered
himself than wound one fancy of
as instantly checked.
Godolphin found it impossible to
her in conversation, and he was,
re, contented—oh how contented!
ze upon her sweet, though pensive,
o follow the direction of her eyes,
proffer, from time to time, with
rtinacity of a man deeply in love,
erefore miserably subservient, flow-
m a vase which stood on the broad
w-seat, and which were received
an abstracted air which puzzled
than discouraged the enamoured
phin.

At last he spoke, as he threw a mantle over the drooping form of Blanch.

"The night-air is cool—yet do not retire yet," he whispered; "it may be long ere we sit and watch the stars again. Yet," he added, doubling the cloak around her, "you may receive injury. Yes, even with privation to myself, let me withdraw you, Blanch—dear, dear Blanch."

He had never spoken thus before. Blanch rose immediately, and walked away. Mr. Godolphin thought, angrily, away.

He stood for a few moments, in amazement also. "Am I to be an object of war and caprice, disdain, rebuffs without a cause?" he said to himself. The colour mounted into his cheeks. He advanced to Lady Arundel. "Madam," he said, "with the formality unusual to him, "you graciously urged me to remain in your chamber during the hour of supper. Pardon me, now retiring."

"I would not trespass on your time, who have given us so much of it," replied Lady Arundel, rising, and coming forward; "but it is Blanch's birth-day."

may not tax your courtesy again. Under the shape of old Margery, it is rumoured in the house, we are to proceed to the Bath to-morrow? She waited for Mr. Godolphin's answer. "Ah! my good friend! we have to sing requiems when we next

Who shall tell whether we shall meet again, when once we part?—stay and pledge Blanch's health with a bumper of sherry sack."

Godolphin had not resolution to

An elegant repast, prepared with more care than usual, was brought in, and he sat down to partake of this, the first of those oft-remembered suppers, in the town of Frome. Godolphin had, it may be called the best parts of a man's qualities; I know not but these are the best part of a man's also—the tenderness and delicacy of feeling for the weak and the distressed; the desire to soothe and comfort others; the minutiae of the social virtues. Some there are who ridicule the feminine attributes, which, indeed, are left out of many men's natures; but

I have known the brave, the intellectual, the eloquent, possess these gentle qualities—the braggart—the weak—never ! Feeling that it might be the last time that ever such an intimacy, so peculiar, so interesting, so fond, might be indulged under similar circumstances, Godolphin, by every little act, by those minute attentions which none but the object perceive, strove again to ingratiate himself with Blanch. How they sank into her heart ! How, when he silently watched every wish, and beguiled her into partaking of the fruits and viands which she would fain have sent away untasted, she felt that benevolence and feeling ennoble the most trifling actions ! But the more she perceived, the more fondly she dwelt on his devotion to her, the more strenuously Blanch resolved to act by Godolphin with sincerity.

The supper-cloth was withdrawn ; and, whilst the window was thrown open to admit the evening breeze, and the clear calm moon might be seen, even as the party sat at the friendly board, sailing on

- a silver flagon with wine was
before Lady Arundel.

With tearful eyes, the Lady of War-
looked at her niece, as, after empty-
contents of the flagon into a silver
cup, she put it to her lips.

"Blanch!" cried the fond relative;
health, darling! May you never
heart less innocent and gay than
moment!—that wish I may wish
The future we know not, and
know. Blessings on thy young
child of my affections!"

"Blanch, my dear cousin," exclaimed
"may a good Providence watch
you! May many years bring but
of happiness!—as, and where
I," she added in a low tone.

As Mr. Godolphin's turn next. He
determined to be grave and cold,
if possible—but the occasion, and
his heart, overcame him.

"I bless you! and those around
he said in a low, earnest tone.
protect you and yours!" He rose
walked to the window, in much

emotion. He was standing, turned towards the table, when Margery was summoned from the ante-chamber also to drink the young lady's health. She held a full beaker in her hand. The days of plenty and prosperity at Wardour were recalled to the old servant's mind, as she looked at the humble lodging, and comparatively humble fare prepared for her lady-paramount, and those who were with her.

"Had we been in the old house, my lady," she observed, ere she put the bumper to her lips, "there would have been great doings. A sight of company; my lord—and the colonel—our young masters—may be the marquis himself—would have come from Raglan—she's his favourite grandchild. Then, to be sure, we should have had Master Herbert at the birth-day. Ah! he's a proper young man. 'Mistress Margery,' says he, the day he left—that day, my lady, you bade him sit so long with Mistress Blanch in the bower—'here's a noble or two,' he gave me five! 'keep 'em to buy ribbons to be gay at my wedding."

he rode off—and a comelier, grace-
outh I never set eyes on. Here's
alth, Mistress Blanch,—and many,
appy years to him and you !” .
victim of Margery's chattering
was paralysed. She sat mute and
ng, staring on vacancy, not raising
es even on Mr. Godolphin. But
Arundel did turn hers on the young
and a mist was cleared away from
od lady's intellectual vision. She
ehended all—all the mischief, per-
misery, that a few weeks' acquaint-
had effected. She saw it now ;
d been blind ; and a superstitious
hich had always possessed her, that
would be miserable in her married
ecurred to her mind.

Godolphin had advanced with a
d look, to listen to Margery's ha-
e ; but he was still at some distance
he table. As she proceeded—as she
ed—as plainly as the longest story
reveal—the betrothment of Blanch
other, the colour which had rushed
his face deserted it ; and his pale, com-

plexion became ghost-like. His eyes
when Lady Arundel turned to him, were
fixed on Blanch with a melancholy gaze,
there was even reproach in that never-
to-be-forgotten look. And thus he stood
for some minutes ; when, bracing up
resolution, as it seemed, he approached
the table calmly, and sat down. That
night he spoke no more to Blanch. And
thus ended the birth-day of eighteen.

CHAPTER X.

Saint Amorist ! what, dost thou think
To taste Love's honey, and not drink
One dram of gall ? or to devour
A world of sweet, and taste no sour ?
Dost thou ever think to enter
Th' Elysian fields, who dar'st not venture
In Charon's barge ? A lover's mind
Must use to sail with every wind.
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

the ensuing day, the ladies of
el were apprised, by order of Mr.
Godolphin, that they were to be
d to Bath ; and at noon they set

country through which they now
was, at this time, wholly under
le of the parliamentary forces ; and
was perhaps little occasion for the
ppointed guards which, conducted
. Godolphin, still attended the pri-

soners. The journey was without incident, and, to all the ladies, without any other pleasure than the reflection that they were drawing near to Wales, and to the very territory, as it might be called, of the Somersets and Herberts—those princely nobles, whose domains comprise more architectural beauty, present more historic association, and offer to the traveller a greater extent of picturesque scenery, than those of any other lord of the soil in these dominions. To Nigel it was pleasant, as it afforded him an opportunity of improving his acquaintance with troopers and serving-men, in whose society he felt greatly at his ease.

Sidney Godolphin, who thus guarded these interesting sufferers from the effects of dire rebellion, was, as Lady Arundel surmised, a younger son of a family distinguished first in the reign of Henry the Eighth and afterwards during the rule of Elizabeth, and of James the First. The elder brother of Sidney, Francis, was a decided royalist, but Sidney, who, like his father, represented his native county of Cornwall,

first dazzled by the arguments, and by the great examples of the great men who first headed the party. But already was his mind turned towards the confederates with whom he had to co-operate. Already—he had relinquished the precious position in which his affections were so interested—had he resolved to take counsel, and to repair, if with him he could do so, the injury to his advice, his name, and influence which he had contributed. “For he was,” said Lord Clarendon, “a young gentleman of incomparable parts, who, being of a constitution and education more delicate and unacquainted with contentions, his observation of the wickedness of the men in the House of Commons, in which he was a member, out of pure indignation of his soul against them, and his love to his country, engaged him to join the king’s party.” Such is the opinion of Godolphin, given by perhaps the most fascinating, perhaps the most satisfactory, of British historians.

His heart harassed by perplexing doubts of the integrity of his course ; his thoughts saddened by the mournful prospect which was unfolded to the thinking mind, Mr. Godolphin, whilst voluntarily seeking and retaining the care of the prisoners of Wardour, had gladly sought the solace of female society. He had sought it to his sorrow. He had now learned that Blanch was destined to another. To his honourable feelings such a conviction was sufficient to drive him for ever from the presence of one whom he regarded as the wife of another ; sufficient to bring the resolution that every effort that a conscientious man could make, should be made to overcome the first, the only bad passion that he ever felt.

“ When I have separated from my prisoners at Bath,” he said to himself, “ I shall form my plans of conduct. In the turmoil of war, in the council, perchance on the field, I shall have a foe to combat and that may aid me in subduing my own heart ;—domestic felicity ! to that

ot, I dare not, look forward. No, macy of a few weeks is for ever ad. Separated, by circumstances in nse, have I been mad to dwell upon on that it ever could be perma-

Godolphin acted up to his resolu- It is in the power of fulfilling and in a stern compliance with ates of reason, that men differ so from women. All the live-long whilst he slowly travelled onwards, often, he rarely approached the , and then, not on the side where sat. When the ladies alighted, e hospitable farm-house, to partake eshment, he gravely inquired after ealth, and, sedulously — as sedu- as ever, provided for their comfort ; tender expressions, *sotto voce*, no lances assured Blanch that she was n his thoughts. Lady Arundel l this change, and it convinced her er surmises were right. Blanch felt it; and it confirmed her also, dangerous, yet delightful, certainty, e was beloved by Godolphin.

There is a certain peculiar charm in being hopelessly beloved; the passion has then so disinterested a character. One's self-importance is so much exalted; one's generous sympathy has so interesting an object in the secret, and often magnified woes of others.

Blanch fed on the idea that Mr. Godolphin loved her, and, at first, it supported her under his neglect. The cavalcade drew near to Bath, descending those hills which form a natural fortification to the ancient city, and whence issue springs not inaptly termed by the great Antoninus, "Waters of the Sun." But while they viewed the scene of varied beauty with delight, the ladies of Arundel missed the frequent greeting, the lively converse, the kind intelligence, on every passing object with which Mr. Godolphin had hitherto lessened the weariness of travel. It was not too late, as they arrived at Bath, to point out to them many objects of interest around and about the city; for the rays of a June sun were gilding the abbey windows.

was silent, and even distant in his

concludes that we are old deni-
re," observed Lady Arundel, an-
as it were, her own thoughts.
Cecily—to Blanch, this is new;
visited the Bath with my deceased
ay, before I was betrothed to my
My father repaired to the Cross-
the hot bath was thought too po-
r the gouty humours, from which
ered, and caused others to suffer;
was mighty passionate in the
m."

Arundel's observations met with
assent from Cecily only; Blanch
ep in thought. All the ladies con-
d—that when they arrived at Bath
destiny would be decided; whether
ere to remain prisoners under the
nd of military force, or to be ran-
by their friends. Lady Arundel
ed to find at Bath some intelli-
verbal, of course, of her husband's
ents. Cecily hoped to hear tidings
sons. Blanch—Ah! who could

say what her young heart most wished. She grieved for her aunt; she sympathised with Cecily; but every wish centred in another theme.

In the dusk of evening, Mr. Godolphin conducted his prisoners to the house of the parliamentary Governor of Ragland, where, for the first time, Lady Arden was received with state suitable to her condition.

"We are ill to please!" was her exclamation, when, after all the arrangements for the evening being completed, Mr. Godolphin, as usual, came to visit his prisoners; "here are we, lodged as well as may be in a goodly chamber, hung with tapestry-work. We have your attendance, an honourable reception. And yet, we all regret the honest stapler of Shaftesbury High Street, his lonely, dark house at Frome, because your good friend, you came there to cheer us and to be cheered."

Mr. Godolphin made no direct reply to this speech. "I have now to explain to your ladyship," was his answer, "the

ve been so long coming so short a
When we set forth, there was
me remnant of the pestilence at
th. We tarried on our journey,
e plague has wholly left the

ere your orders, then, so merciful?"
Lady Arundel, looking shrewdly
Godolphin's face. "Have our con-
learned clemency, since the time
they refused the gallant Lindesay
n humanity at Edge-Hill? When
id the bravest, the most lamented
gracious sovereign's commanders
bed of straw, letting the blood,
ched, run from his wounds! O
d! torn by convulsions! racked by
ing passions! is our national cha-
quite gone? Are we merciless, as
idel Turk, or the wild Indian?"

adam," replied Mr. Godolphin,
his cheek kindled as he looked at
nerable lady, moved from her usual
ty by the remembrance of woes
which her own fate had a melan-
connexion; "when you speak of the

gallant Lindesay, wrong not the equanimity of the brave, humane Essex. He was in danger when Lindesay fell. Courtesy and justice are among the qualities of the noble Essex. Let it please you to remember him whilst you charge this unhappy country with the wreck of all that is worthy of our fated country, that, not among Royalists only, but in the lines of Roundheads, 'tis a saying among common men after a battle, 'They cannot find in their hearts to hurt men who have nothing in their hands.' Take not your pattern of a true-hearted patriot from such low cowards as Hungerford and Ludlow, who have alone come within your ken."

"We will waive contention in this matter," returned Lady Arundel, after a pause. "Woman-like, when I find my strength too strong for me, I break up the party. Tell me, Master Godolphin, if you mean how long we shall bide here? and how long you will be our gaoler? Bear witness that we have been patient in our imprisonment; asking no questions."

for no news. But, now that we
near to my native region, where my
kindred rule the fair castles—his
y's humblest servants—my heart
to learn something of the destiny
se my lips have daily prayed for.
ld fain know how the king's affairs
; I ask not of your adherents. I
fain learn where the brave Rupert
his impetuous course, in what
ion we may look for the next en-
ment; and,—but I have a thousand
ons,—first, when do you leave us?"
When I am commanded," answered
phin, with a faint smile,—his eyes
untarily sought those of Blanch,—
he withdrew them instantly: "that
ke a Scottishman's answer. But I
n to satisfy far more important ques-
The king still bides at Oxford;
uld be tedious to enter upon all the
ent aspects which the prospects of
majesty assume." He paused, then
d, "There are some, even of the
s, who regret that the recent plot of
und Waller hath failed; some, whose

fidelity to their adopted cause is secretly suspected; the arms of the Royalists have lately prospered, and dissensions have risen up among the leaders of the Commons."

"You speak dejectedly," said Cecily. "I begin to suspect that you perceive the error of your ways. You will fight for the king yet, Master Godolphin."

"Rupert," resumed Godolphin, "is scouring the country:" his face became suddenly flushed as he added, "Talk not, Madam, of barbarities, lest you draw down reprisals which it may not become me to make. The prince—thanks to God—he is not an Englishman!—hath lately put to the sword the whole of Lord Stamford's brave regiment. Many wretched captives this German brute tied together with cords, drove them through the city, beaten like dogs." Godolphin stamped his foot in agony as he spoke. "Madam! among these unfortunate people were brave and true hearts, high and honourable natures, though misguided or, let me own it, perchance misguided."

tical errors. But, allow me," re-
Godolphin, "to pay tribute to the
ess character, the pure and Chris-
principles of one for whom my
bleeds. The king hath remon-
with Prince Rupert. 'Take,' he
id to him, 'the affections of our
s rather than their towns.' Let
air actions make it appear that you
malignants."

essed be his name!" exclaimed
l, coming forward into the room.
er—Cecily, I hope some day to see
overeign. If ever,—if ever we are
ned, I shall pray my uncle Arundel
e me to Oxford."

spoke in all the excitement of
iasm; and, for a time, a stronger
ent than love for Godolphin light-
transiently, her beautiful face.

nd where are *our* forces?" asked
Arundel; "Pardon her, Mr. Godol-
she is but a romantic girl. When
ft Shaftesbury, Hertford you told
was with Prince Maurice in the
He hath probably advanced nearer

to Somersetshire. Alas! I dread the sight of bloodshed, again! I would fain be a prisoner still, rather than go into the scene of war. My spirits are broken: my hopes of any amicable termination to this great quarrel are gone. I have no home to return to; so best remain for ever in your charge. Hath Hertford come to Bridgewater as yet? You turn aside Master Godolphin; for God's sake tell me, are they near,—very near? for, perchance my husband—my son may be with Lord Hertford's army?"

Lady Arundel gazed almost wildly at Godolphin. "Oh! I may see them!" she exclaimed; "I *may* see them once more! But how? as victors, or as captives? the God in heaven only knows!"

Lady Arundel struggled with an emotion which she never indulged; but Blanch and Cecily flew to support and soothe her.

"You, my child," said Lady Arundel, looking up at Cecily, "have an equal right to be overcome; for our Henry

be, for ought we know, with our general. Ah, Cecily! misfortunes taught you much patience. I remember when a little matter—even a absence, a moment's gloom—would brought tears into your eyes, my but now you bear your bereavement like a Roman heroine. And Mr. Godolphin, are the enemy? bold and active Waller? he, who, have heard predicted, will not die bed? You may say the same of the nation now."

"The last action," replied Godolphin, "at the base of the Mendip Hills, Wells. Madam, I shock you; but hostile forces have really been so—the Marquis in Wells, Sir William's men, like a cloud, hanging o'er all. At the encounter Prince Maurice was wounded—severely, I believe. Marquis's army retreated; Waller's, we, are daily, hourly, expected in safety."

"Merciful Heavens! protect us!" cried Arundel. "My good friend, if any

engagement ensues between these armies, we part with *you*?"

Godolphin was beginning to reply, when his eyes were directed by an impetuous movement of Cecily, towards Blanch. The young girl had fallen down beside the chair on which Lady Arundel sat. No one had noticed her illness; and in a few moments she recovered, was led to the window, and placed on a chair there. But it was impossible for Mr. Godolphin to be ignorant of the cause of her fainting, and he was wholly thrown off his guard. He leaned over her with a fondness, a delight on her recovery, which caused Lady Arundel to sigh often, and deeply. She could not find in her heart to disturb the uncontrolled happiness which these two young people seemed to feel in each other's sympathy and love, for many moments. Then she recollected herself; a mournful presage came over her; she drew near to Blanch, and, bidding her rise, recommended her to go to her own chamber.

Mr. Godolphin retired, and Lady Arun-

continued to sit with Cecily on the window-seat, whence they saw that ere in the heavens, which seems almost a tale of death and resurrection, the gradual decline of the sun ; yet still they felt the influence of his beams, until as the gloom arose the glorious moon, accompanied by a clear planet, in the dark firmament. Themes, serious, retrospective, prophetic, occupied the mother and daughter-in-law, as they noted the changes in the peaceful heavens, themselves unconscious of the lapse of

They spoke of Wardour, of family conflicts, of ruined fortunes, and of prospects still more dreary. But they acknowledged the merciful and almost miraculous preservation of their lives, which redeemed them from destruction. They spoke of the happy unions which they had enjoyed ; of their confidence that should it not be permitted them to meet *here*, they should meet in the communion of the just. The heroic, disinterested character of Lord Arundel, his

characteristic injunction to defend the castle, and the compliance with that request were calmly, even cheerfully, discussed. To a life of duty and affection Lady Arundel felt that she had put the finishing touch. Not from a wanton sacrifice of life, but from a sense of duty, had she defended Wardour. They reviewed the past career of the Royalists; they dwelt, and they dwelt solely on the —on the generosity, gratitude, and affection of the English nobility to their sovereign. Then they touched on homelier themes. The cherished hope—cherished most by her who fondly believed what she hoped—by Cecily, that her children might be restored to her; that she and her husband might dwell together in peace, somewhere—perhaps at Ragland. They spoke of Blanch, and, whilst in the confidence of true affection Lady Arundel was beginning to unfold her fears, and to explain her conjectures, their cogitations were fearfully interrupted by strange and appalling sounds.

A murmuring of voices, low, sullen, yet

as if close to the wall which the court, became louder and it was interspersed with heavy as if not from one, but from persons, suffering extreme agony. The shrieks of females varied terrible sounds; nothing could, for some, be discerned; but, after listening the space of ten minutes or more, at expectation, the two ladies perceived through the gloom, that the front of the court was thrown open: the torches fell upon the paved court, disclosed — what it thrilled their eyes to observe — that people were bearing on trestles, or in their arms, bodies, or dying, from which the moans of death, which they had heard, proceeded. The cavalcade which guarded these miserable beings stopped, and the collected torches fell upon ghastly faces, — garments and accoutrements stained with blood. The sufferers were allowed to remain in the court, the fresh breezes evening playing on their fainting forms, and some preparation was made for their

reception in the house of Sir Thomas Bridges, the Governor of the Town which Lady Arundel now tenanted; and groans, and whispering entreaties that the susceptible sufferers might long be left there, alone broke the awful silence of that still and starry night. The moonbeams scarcely penetrated into the deep and dank enclosure of the court, — so close and dark, that it seemed to form a place of sepulture for the dead, of which there were several among the figures brought in for aid. These lay unheeded on a mass of cloaks and baggage; and their silence, “the rapture of repose!” as it might justly be called, appeared almost most enviable when contrasted with the heart-thrilling tones of those who were still left to anguish and despair.

It was as if the events of a life-time were crowded into that one half hour, in which Lady Arundel and her daughter stood transfixed — not speaking nor stirring, — gazing, absorbed, upon the centre of the court-yard. When, however, the people, who were crowding around the suf-

began to carry the wounded persons into the house, leaving the dead, Arundel started, as if from a dream. "There has been an engagement!" she cried, grasping Cecily by the arm. "Child, my mind misgives me; but, better. These wretched men are — yes, I perceived it by their dress, rebels, — but they are fellow-citizens!"

She hastened to the table, and rang for a little silver bell. "Margery," she called to the old domestic, "seek the head of the household; tell him we are needed in the cure of the wounded — wounded, alas! Tell him we are poor, as good housewives should be, with herbs, ointments, needles, liniments, and the like. Proffer thy aid graciously," said the old lady, well knowing that Cecily's political and religious prejudices ran as high as those of her betters. "There are among these wounded men, soldiers," resumed Lady Arundel, again going to the window. "Ah! Cecily, look at that fine young man, whose locks

fall about his shoulders,—some mother's pride, perhaps; who can witness *that*, and justify war? One, two, three, four, quite dead! They are raising the fourth: see, he is covered with a cloak! yet, methinks he, too, is a Royalist. I would fain know—I am wild to know where this battle has been fought, and by whom lost or won."

Lady Arundel spoke with an impatience and anxiety unusual to her, and which revealed the secret impression — or pre-sentiment let me rather call it — that some one member of her numerous relations might have been mingled up with the events of the preceding day.

All was again silent: the court was cleared of its melancholy visitants, and they were, doubtless, bestowed in different apartments of the spacious dwelling-house, in which the governor received such prisoners of war whose condition of importance rendered it necessary that they should be well guarded, and hospitably treated.

An hour passed away. It was spent by Cecily in some fruitless endeavours to

on what had been the nature of the
ence received at Bath that day;
e servants were all employed in
parts of the house; even Margery
visible. All was darkness; and,
hum of voices in some of the
g-rooms which opened into the gal-
rough which Cecily walked, and,
e moans of some wretch, in the
of the first dressing, all was
that grave to which many were
ng.

y Arundel, meantime, sat in the
ent in which Cecily had left her,
and in deep thought. That irre-
presentiment of coming evil which
iously visits the mind at certain
of life, pressed down her spirits.
ought to reason: she endeavoured
y. Still, still the boding clouds
ed the mental prospect. She could
ally her resolution to meet the ap-
ing calamity; she could not be re-
. Restless and perturbed, she paced
loomy chamber, until footsteps in
atechamber made her turn eagerly to

the door. Half anticipating some tidings of evil peculiar to herself, Lady Arundel hurried towards it, with a pallid face and quivering lip. She started back. "Thank God! only Mr. Godolphin!" was her exclamation. "You will explain all. What means the awful scene that Cecily and I have witnessed in the court-yard? Alas more, more bloodshed!"

"The Royalists' cause, madam," answered Godolphin, "hath been victorious. Last night Sir William Waller, whose great object it hath been to prevent the Marquis of Hertford from joining his forces to those which the King commanded in person, drew up his troops in Landsdown. A battle ensued: heard you not the firing before noon?"

"I do remember," replied Lady Arundel, "a dull, heavy, distant sound, but I noted it not. My God be praised! Oh how my lord — how my son will rejoice at these tidings! Forgive me, Mr. Godolphin, forgive me! Perchance you have kindred, friends, who have fallen in this battle?"

Godolphin answered not immediately, and Lady Arundel could not well, in the light of a dim lamp, discern his countenance.

"There are many sufferers," was his first length. "I know I cannot appeal to Lady Arundel's compassionate feelings in vain. The wounded, on both sides, have been brought into the city; ten or twelve lie here. In the midst of this," exclaimed Godolphin solemnly, "with his hands clasped, and looking up—" "their enmities will soon be hushed in their mangled limbs mingled in death! But you are skilled, Lady Arundel, in those remedies which alleviate pain. A young and suffering sufferer, as I guess, and of your own family lies groaning in yonder chamber at the end of the court — there, where one dim light shines. *I* cannot hear his moans unheeded. Will you see him? Can you administer some soothing potion to allay his agonizing thirst?—to check the progress of his fever?"

Lady Arundel put her hand to her forehead. "Where is Blanch?" she asked

hurriedly. "Mr. Godolphin, my poor head cannot recall the names and proportions of the drugs I have with me. I want young heads to help me. Cecilia is, I know, occupied; but Blanch Blanch?"

Lady Arundel hastened to her niece's sleeping-room as she spoke. Blanch, overcome by the indisposition of the afternoon, had fallen into a deep sleep. She had heard nothing of the disturbance in the court; knew nothing of what had happened. Her hair hung over her shoulders, and the peaceful, youthful countenance was calm as that of infancy. Lady Arundel stood for a moment loth to awaken her; then, suddenly remembering herself, she grasped her niece's arm and bade her arise.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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RAGLAND CASTLE.



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ENGLAND CASTLE:

A TALE

OF THE GREAT REBELLION.

BY MRS. THOMSON,

AUTHOR OF

“WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS;” “ANNE
BOLEYN,” ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1843.



RAGLAND CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

What news, Lord Bardolph ? Every minute now
could be the father of some stratagem.
The times are wild : contention, like a horse
full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose,
and bears all down before him.

Henry IV.

A short time Lady Arundel, in her
and cloak, followed by Blanch,
bearing a phial in her hand, and attended
by Mr. Godolphin with a torch, were seen
crossing the court to a small lodge at
opposite corner. A tap at the door
gained admittance, and, ascending a few
steps, the ladies, preceded by Godolphin,
entered into the room wherein the
sick man lay.

The patient was in a high fever, toss-
ing his limbs, and throwing his head about,
in one continual paroxysm of pain ;

and rising with sudden and fearful haste from time to time, to snatch from the hands of a boy who stood near the bed the only attendant that could be spared him,—a goblet of water, which, though again and again replenished, could not satiate the agonizing thirst of the sufferer. Accents, hurried, and uttered in a distinct whisper, arrested the steps of Lady Arundel, ere she had seen the face of the youth; she fancied—yet it might be only the effects of her own overwrought feelings—that she heard the name of Arundel amid the various expressions to which she listened.

Mr. Godolphin stood in pitying silence hanging over the bed. His kind heart too sensitive for such times, was deeply touched by the agonies which he knew not how to alleviate.

“Poor, poor youth!” he exclaimed in a tone of the deepest compassion. “The surgeon,” he added, addressing Lady Arundel, “declares that the wounds are dangerous, if—but he hears us,” he whispered, as he perceived that the gla

red eyes of the sufferer were turned
to him.

"Cheer up, you are better now; you
are better than you were," said the ami-
able Godolphin, placing his hand gently
on the burning brow of the wounded
man as a fond and faithful wife would
do.

"Yes, I am better now," returned the
man, just sensible enough to answer any
question; but with his poor brain "stuffed
with coming fancies." "I am better
now. — Oh! do not
lean upon me—oh! let the air blow on
me." He turned his head languidly away,
and an interval of stillness succeeded.
The doctor never was at her work; in a few
minutes the voice, low muttering, was
heard again.

"What has Dormer charged? Is Hopton on
his feet? There! there! the Prince is
killed, he's beaten off his horse. Be-
lieve it, believe it! I saw Carnarvon
fall off the field with his head on his
neck, — he's dead, — he's dead
this time,—sir—I say he's dead."

“—His first engagement,” whispered Godolphin to Lady Arundel, “and the dreadful scene, the agitating remembrance, all encrease his fever.—Mada know you the youth?”

“I do,” replied Lady Arundel, with quivering lip, and pale as death. She turned, however, with composure, to Blanch, who stood behind Mr. Godolphin. “Give me the phial, and withdraw. Withdraw!” she reiterated sternly. “’Tis a sight for you. Boy,” she added, looking at the attendant, “see the lady safe across the court.—Nay, Mr. Godolphin, remain here; she will be safe.”

Lady Arundel almost thrust Blanch out of the room, as she spoke, then closed the door after her; and first, ere she proffered one word of explanation, she dropped some of the contents of the phial into a glass, and, with some difficulty, induced the patient to swallow them. Then she bathed his burning hands with cold water; arranged his bed—entreating Mr. Godolphin’s aid—and, shrouding the light from the eyes of the sufferer with

she sat down in the remotest corner of the room, and beckoned Godolphin near her.

"He is," she whispered, whilst the tears started into her eyes, "a kinsman of mine."

"How he came here I know not. His name is Herbert,—Edward Herbert. Do not start, my friend!—He is betrothed to my niece, Blanch," added Lady Arundel, speaking straight forward, as if she had a right to fulfil, and sought not to observe the defect.

Godolphin asked no further questions. In a few moments, after some hesitation, Lady Arundel said, "Seek, if you will, Blanch. 'Twere best you should deliver her of this misfortune to her affianced. Warn her for the worst; yet bid her not conclude the case hopeless. I will remain here," said Lady Arundel mournfully, "and,—and, send Cecily to me. I know not that my spirits can endure the sorrows of this poor boy, alone."

"May not I return to aid you?" asked Godolphin, calmly, but in a tone which marked too truly the struggle that was agitating him.

"No!" was Lady Arundel's emphatic answer. "Return to Blanch." She took the light, and, opening the door, held it to light Godolphin on his way. "I trust to your honour," she whispered, as she stood on the edge of the steps. "Come and counsel her, as you would a sister."

Godolphin was moved. He pressed the hand of Lady Arundel. He saw—knew that she guessed his feelings. Her confidence in his honour affected him deeply.

He hastened across the court; and as he turned to look up at the window, dimly lighted; Lady Arundel's shadow marked the watchfulness of her affection by its perfect stillness. Once he stopped before he entered the room where he expected to find Blanch and Cecilia, and then, with a grave composure, stood before the cousins.

They both arose hastily at his entrance. "Lady Arundel bids me summon you, madam," he said, addressing Cecilia, "to assist her in the charge of a wounded Cavalier."

"He is very ill?" inquired Blanch, standing near to Godolphin. "His groans reach to my heart. Will he recover?"

"Lady Arundel has hopes—Lady Cecily, I will attend you to the chamber where he is lodged," replied Mr. Godolphin, without looking at Blanch. He led Cecily away, and Blanch, through the window, could see their retreating forms for some distance—then they were lost in the room.

Blanch had a missal on her lap, and was seeking to compose her mind by prayer, when Mr. Godolphin returned. Her resolutions of coolness had been completely dispelled by the very peculiar and extraordinary circumstances in which they were brought together. Fate seemed resolved that they should not be estranged in heart, lest they might be separated by the power of obstacles born with them, it may be said. But they had never been together alone since the day when their engagement had been made known to Mr. Godolphin; and they were too deeply in love, not to betray

some confusion when thus, without any earthly witnesses to their words, they met—perhaps for the last time—alone.

The resolutions of a fond heart—I mean of a fond *female* heart—are not to be compared in firmness to the snow-wreath or to the quagmire, or to any other yielding substance that imagination can suggest. Blanch was of an ardent, affectionate nature; every sentiment of gratitude had been called forth by Godolphin's kindness to her and to her friends; and it was not, therefore, a matter of surprise that she could now scarcely contain those feelings which were only to be repressed by an abstract idea of duty towards a man whom her friends had chosen for her, and whom she had thought it, therefore, some merit, not to hate. But, in the interview, when it would have been enough for an unprincipled man to have gleaned from an inexperienced girl, in all the delusive fever of a first love, an avowal of attachment, Sidney Godolphin showed that his sense of honour, and his sense of justice, were far stronger even than his passions.

He sat down, indeed, by Blanch. Perhaps he felt that their mutual tenderness gone too near to a disclosure, for it to be possible to speak to her as an indifferent man, or even as a friend, or a lover. Perhaps he could not sustain the unworthy dissimulation, as some persons would have termed it, necessary to support of such a mask to such feelings as those which he entertained. Perhaps he felt too deeply and painfully interested in the welfare of her whom he so fully commiserated, to be silent on the future—that future which they were to share together.

He told Blanch gently, and gradually, the intelligence which Lady Arundel had led her to know; he stated the grounds on which that danger was to be apprehended—the reasons there were for hope. He was heard with far less surprise than he expected; the recent and hurried events of the last six weeks had taken away the vividness of the impressions made upon the young mind. But it was not without emotion that he spoke, not without tears from the sobs, the passionate sobs,

of Blanch, that self-accusation was mingled with her pity and horror at the story of Mr. Herbert.

"I knew not that he had joined King's forces," she said, when she recovered the power of language. "O Mr. Godolphin! if he dies, what reflections shall not I have to charge myself with?" She stopped, confused, and tears were suddenly checked by affliction at her own disclosure.

Godolphin rose, and walked away from her. He dared not trust himself to look at Blanch. But a sense of duty, the determination to do all that he could to repair the evil which he had unknowingly done, caused him to address her.

It was impossible for him not to know the position in which Blanch and he were placed relatively to each other, and Godolphin, when he proffered the kindest and purest advice that ever breathed into the ear of woman, referred to their untold yet well-known feelings. He reviewed the last few weeks of their lives; he spoke of the manner in which

had been thrown together, dependent greatly, on each other's society. He resorted to his own unconsciousness of Blanch's engagement. He made no declaration of attachment; but he reasoned as a man reasons who had placed his whole freight of welfare in one shallow vessel.

His words, although they breathed nothing that could flatter the fond hopes of Blanch, nothing that could hold out the slightest prospect of ever, at any future time, renewing the intimacy which must now be broken off, soothed the broken-spirited girl, in this, the first difficulty of her eventful life. She wept; but they were not bitter tears that she shed.

The idea of deliberately doing wrong; the purpose of cherishing an attachment forbidden by the laws of God—as she considered—and by human bonds, had never entered Blanch's innocent mind: and she expressed those sentiments with the confidence of her warm heart, secure in the generosity and honour of him who heard her.

"From our infancy," she said, without raising her eyes from the ground—"Mr Herbert and I were destined for each other. As children we played together as children we were ever coupled together by our playmates. There was a time—before we had *ever* parted, that I regarded the prospect placed before me with delight.—Nay, Mr. Godolphin, I used to long to be free, and of importance, and, perhaps, noted for some high deeds, as wives in these days are. But when he came back to Wardour"—she paused, then added—"’tis of no use talking on these matters—I do not love him."

"But his heart is yours!"—replied Mr Godolphin, in a firm tone. "Yes, he cannot have known you and remained indifferent." There was a silence of a few moments' duration; then Mr. Godolphin continued—"Whatever may be our inclinations, how difficult soever the struggle may be,—as long as we strive to do what conscience enforces, we cannot be wretched."

He is ill; and I pity him," mut-
Blanch; "and I will do all that
all that honour, can require. But,
and she clasped her hands together
spoke in passionate accents, "what
tom is it, to enchain the young be-
reflection is permitted to aid our
e! To bind us in vows which it
perjury to break, yet, fulfilling
, we hate—yes, hate the very ob-
to which—no, no; I am wrong—
wrong; he is generous, true, kind.
Edward—poor Herbert!" She ran
ly to the window, and gazed fixedly
the glimmering light which burned
e sick room of the wounded man, and
h she could discern across the court.
Mr. Godolphin," she exclaimed, after
e minutes' silence, "you are right.
e is nothing that can give us peace of
d, except our duty. May I be aided
ine!" she added, clasping her hands,
looking up. "Farewell. Do not en-
vour to see us again—farewell. We
l hear of you; we shall—that is *I* shall,
able at every report of battles, or—

or—but things may mend; *your* path may be established, you will then stand among the great, the fortunate, the happy. In time—in time,” she cried, extending her hand towards him, “you will form your poor prisoners, you will form new ties, happier than I am, for you may be free to choose, and I must learn to be content. I shall strive to rejoice, indeed—indeed I shall, Mr. Godolphin.” She released her hand from the firm grasp of Mr. Godolphin, and quitted the room.

It was with justice that Lady Arundel confided in the honour of Sidney Godolphin; and the discretion of the venerable lady was shown in authorizing him to point out to Blanch the line of her duty, and to aid her in the performance of it by example. During the sojourn of the ladies at Bath, Blanch and Godolphin met no more. Nor did he by an indiscreet attempt to interest her feelings, by the melancholy of his aspect when he passed through the court, or by ever seeking to throw himself in her way, infringe the barrier which honour and the obligations of a Christian imposed.

was, perhaps, the most trying period Blanch — unemployed, solitary, and accusing,—whilst Lady Arundel and her family were busy in the sick room of Herbert. Mr. Godolphin was also constantly there; devoting himself at intervals to the frantic invalid, whose excited nerves and high fever still occasioned strong delirium; sustaining the ladies in a trial so unlooked for, and witnessing scenes of which none, who have witnessed the prostration of human nature, can form any conception; and proving, with the ready generosity of one whose heart is true, the ready generosity of one whose man feeling deeply for the sufferings of another, every palliative to suffering, every skill, or the scanty comforts of a garrison town, could afford. For days, weeks, the recovery of Mr. Herbert was doubtful. During that time, it were difficult to say how poignant were the sufferings which every detail of his sufferings, every expression, even from the lips of the dying, imparted to poor Blanch. She watched ardently, she prayed earnestly for recovery. She purposed, one day,

to atone by candour first, then by devotion and duty, for her breach of faith to her betrothed. All his good and gentle qualities, all their early intimacy, the recollections of their last meeting, arose to her mind as she stood, night after night, in the little ante-room, next to that which Herbert occupied, and listened to his moans.

One evening, miserable and penitently contrite, she stood longer than usual in the ante-room, without being able to gather intelligence of the sufferer. Lady Arundel and Cecily were in his room, and Mr. Gresham ; but he was accustomed to go there by a different door, and never came into the ante-chamber. It grew late ; the usual hour when Lady Arundel and Cecily were obliged to leave Mr. Herbert ; but he had passed away ; and still a profound quiet reigned in the chamber.

Suddenly, a chill crept over Blanche's frame — a pang of fear, of conscience-struck to her heart. What could this silence mean ?—Could it be *death* ? She sat down ; for her head became giddy, and

divered as she drew her knees up, and, holding her face with her hands, rested it on her knees.

Another hour passed; her expectations, her fears, became intolerable. She was a creature of impulse: one of those whose nature prompts them to so much of good and evil in this world. She went to the door, and opened it so gently that it stood ajar without any of those sounds which were occupied within noting that the door had been opened. She saw distinctly what passed. Mr. Herbert was lying motionless on the bed; oh! what a change from the fine buoyant youth of yesterday!—“Laid down like grass.” Mr. Godolphin was supporting his head, Lady Arundel was pouring cordial into his mouth. His emaciated, pale, with the deep lines of suffering on his young brow, told not all the havoc that had been made.—His hands! the hands which lay powerless now, almost transparent, each muscle visible, which shewed what had been his agonies, told of his danger.

Lancelot drew the door to, kneeled down

on the floor, and groaned. She knew little more that passed, such was the intensity of the thoughts in which she was absorbed, until she was aroused by hearing Lady Arundel's voice, summoning her to accompany her across the court.

"Is he—is he dead?" asked the unhappy girl, staring with a wild, desponding look at Lady Arundel, and without rising from the floor.

"Dead?—no! He is, in my opinion, much better. He has, for the first time, known us; called Cecily by her name; and asked—no matter—rise! and hasten across the court!"

Blanch burst into tears. But she followed her aunt in silence, and they went into their usual apartments.

Lady Arundel looked wasted and worn like one who had sustained a pressing anxiety during the last three hours. But she spoke little on the subject of Herbert's illness. Cecily said nothing. It was manifest that both these ladies considered that Blanch had little right to hear anything of him. Poor Blanch

judgment of her friends could not
and her more than her own conscience.
or the last day or two, she had, from
use of duty, again worn Mr. Herbert's
ait. It hung by a chain at her side ;
during the supper, Lady Arundel
d her for it, and Blanch put it into
hand.

Poor Edward !” exclaimed Lady
ndel, as she looked upon the fine
y, the flowing curls, the full and
tiful mouth, which the miniature
fully represented. “He was like this
. Here, Blanch, take it from me !”
Keep it ! keep it !” cried Blanch
ionately. “I do not deserve it ! You
w—Cecily knows, that I have no right
o right at all to wear that picture
my heart, whilst”——

“I will keep it,” replied Lady Arundel,
ely, “until you ask me for it, Blanch.”
d the portrait was deposited in Lady
ndel's capacious pocket forthwith.

From this time, Mr. Herbert's recovery,
ugh gradual, was uninterrupted ; and
ly Arundel had leisure to review the

circumstances of her own condition, to consider the prospects which opened before her at this period.

During the last fortnight, when the siege and surrender of Wardour had become generally known;—when the gallant defence made became bruited about; when the subsequent outrages upon the castle and park were detailed; a general sentiment of commiseration had been excited for the admirable woman who had never, before the event which called her into public notice, stepped forward to court attention; and who was now not only willing, but eager, to return to the privacy of her domestic sphere. Even the members of Lady Arundel's own family, and especially by her rich and loyal brother, Henry Somerset, Marquis of Worcester, strenuous exertions had been made to redeem her and her companions from their state of duress by large ransoms. But all these efforts would have been unavailing, had not the interested representations of one faithful friend, and his unremitting endeavours

secure the release of the heroines of Wardour been made available, co-operating with the influence of Lord Worcester's purse. This friend, whose aim it had been to lessen the rigours of confinement, and who now sought to shorten its duration, was the kind-hearted, the true, the worthy Godolphin.

Five months had elapsed since the surrender of Wardour—three weeks since the battle of Lansdown and the arrival of Edward Herbert in Bath—when, one evening, that young Cavalier was permitted by the surgeons to cross the court-yard, supported by an attendant, and to enter the apartment allotted to Lady Mordaunt. But this indulgence was accompanied by various restrictions. The promise of a soldier was exacted, that Edward Herbert would attempt no escape; a sentinel was stationed within the hall;—Edward paced the melancholy court-yard: the youth, thus rescued from the jaws of death, had lands, fortune, and numerous adherents; and though he was still in the hands of guardians, being under twenty-

one-years of age, yet the Marquis Worcester was one of his guardians, to his niece he was betrothed.

Edward Herbert, as the fresh air on his wasted form, and brought a t of colour into his pale cheek, looked to the blue sky, and blessed the morning which brought him from the bed of even to imprisonment. By female kindness and care his hours of anguish been soothed. As he recovered, an anxious period of convalescence had watched by Lady Arundel and Cecil they had soothed every irritation—calmed every hour. But he had not Blanch; she had not sought to share gentle offices which her relatives had well fulfilled.

This had not appeared remarkable in Mr. Herbert, for a strict barrier of propriety was established between people betrothed. The manners of persons of rank in the first Charles's days were severely correct: for, so different was the court to that of his successor, that any one were inclined to do evil, it

necessary, as Wellwood, in his "Memoirs,"
says, "to do it at a distance from the
." Hence those observances of de-
n which were never dreamt of in the
of the coarse James the First, and
n were remembered, only to be scoffed
the reign of Charles the Second.
long as he remained in his chamber,
Herbert, therefore, understood, that
ad no chance of seeing Blanch, whom
magination still cherished; but whose
e—such was the modesty of youth—
ad not, until the latter part of his
ss, ventured to utter. And many ex-
ations had occupied the leisure hours;
youth had told his own tale—modest-
indeed; but such were its incidents
no colouring had been required to
hten truth. Upon leaving Compton
yates, he had repaired to Oxford;—
enlisted in the army of Lord Hertford
volunteer; he had marched with that
ant nobleman in the various enter-
es by which the summer campaign had
a occupied; he had served under
nce Maurice; and the eyes of the

young soldier glistened as he eulogised the hardy valour of that intrepid but indiscreet general; and had accompanied the Prince, the gallant Sir Ralph Hopton, and the ornament of the royalist party, Dormer, Earl of Carnarvon, when they pursued the parliament's forces over the Mendip Hills;—he had fought at Lansdown; and, with his appetite for glory unsatisfied, Edward Herbert, although he vaunted not his exploits, was chafed at the adverse fortune which kept him inactive and a prisoner in the governor's house at Bath.

Yes! even though Blanch were near him! for the actual business of life, and of such a life, had already, by directing and elevating his attention, allayed the ardour, though not the constancy of his passion. The hope of marriage, once so cherished, was now long deferred in Edward Herbert's mind. Marriage was not suited to those who ventured into troubled waters. It would prove an encumbrance—a tie, which he must not contemplate. Yet he looked forward, nevertheless, with

considerable perturbation to his first interview with his cousin Blanch.

"You are come, Edward, at a critical juncture," said Lady Arundel, as she received the youth with some degree of composure in her sitting-room. "I trust your bandage sits easy, Edward? Let me agitate you—we are free—no, my boy, you are not free!—I speak of you, Blanch, myself, and Margery. You and I am chagrined to say, remain in captivity."

"I do not feel chagrined, Madam. I would scorn to owe my liberty to these terms. My Lord Hertford's dragoons have the chance to come this way; and then I will all limp to the encounter."

"Well said! vastly well. We are to go out—we must set out to-morrow."

"And may I not see Mistress Blanch?" asked Herbert, his vaunted courage failing him at the thought of the loneliness and dullness of months, perhaps years, of solitude, without an incident to vary the monotony of hopeless imprisonment. "God knows whether I shall ever see any

of you again ! I wish I were at the Devizes, with dear Hopton, and the Prince."

" You are dull and down-hearted, dear Edward ; 'tis the meagrim—very much in your family, as I have heard my brother Worcester say ; and I do not know that Blanch will be able to do you much good," added Lady Arundel, looking anxiously at the door. " She is grown thin and vaporish. She promised me to come, though. She was always a wilful lass, you know, Edward."

" Oh, madam ! I like wilful ladies best," returned Herbert, looking impatiently around him. " Is that Blanch's lute ? are those her books ? ' Sidney Godolphin ; '—see," and he shook some violets from between the leaves of a copy of Sidney's " Arcadia " as he spoke. " I shall rally Blanch upon this, madam."

The youth sank back as he spoke, exhausted ; for feverish excitement, rather than strength, gave him unnatural spirits at one moment ; at the next, he fell into the depression of weakness.

He was in this state—feeble, low-spirited, with the dread of a long imprisonment before his eyes, and having just learned that his partners in misfortune were about to leave him—when Blanch came into the room. All day long she had been bracing her resolution for this interview: she was inexpressibly shocked when she saw her former playmate.

Whilst she looked mournfully at him, Herbert, whose eyes were closed, though not in sleep, at this moment opened them and looked at her. To him the appearance of the fair girl, to whom he had plighted his troth, was only increased in loveliness. There was an expression, soft, tender, thoughtful, which he had never before seen in the object of his attachment, and which gave a dignity and charm to her beauty.

The recognition of the affianced pair was shy and abrupt: Blanch could not utter one kind word, not even of inquiry. Herbert could not proffer a single compliment. But, after a few moments of embarrassment, he took up some dried,

yet fragrant, violets, and said, with a faint smile,—“these are yours, Blanch; do they come from Wardour?”

“No,” returned Blanch, colouring deeply; and, with an impetuous effort, she dashed the violets from her.

“I should have valued them if they had. Was the arbour quite destroyed?—And the coppice? I wonder whether the coppice is all trampled down—where we used to see so many squirrels? Did you bring King Charles with you, Blanch?”

“I did,” replied Blanch, looking down. “Mr. Godolphin took a fancy to him, and I know not where he has bestowed him.”

“No matter. Lord Jermyn has promised me another—that is, if I am not lodged in the Tower for the rest of my life. I will make them pay dearly for it, if they attempt it, though. I forgot—I have no arms now;” and the young man turned away in much bitterness of soul, as he spoke.

Blanch saw his distress. She had a kind heart, and the very consciousness of having, as she felt, injured Mr. He

, made her more tender to his present
rings. She drew near him; looked
passionately at his altered appear-
, and, taking up her lute, struck
e chords.

Shall I play? Shall I sing?" She
d softly, bending down beside the
t chair wherein the sufferer sat.

Do, dear, dear Blanch—anything but
artial air; for I shall never, never
t under our monarch's banner again.
el I shall not, Blanch. I shall die
."

Shame, shame, Herbert," cried Blanch
hingly. "Then I know not what to
," she added, musing, as her fingers
shed the chords.

Sing of love," said Mr. Herbert ti-
ly; "'twill be something to think of
n you are away."

I am grown a Puritan," replied Blanch,
ng down her lute, "and disclaim such
mes. Suppose we give up music, and
tell me your adventures. You have
n at Oxford? How I envy you!"

Do you really wish to know what has

befallen me, since we parted?" cried Mr. Herbert, touched and gratified by this seeming interest; but his satisfaction brought crimson blushes to the cheeks of Blanch—reproaches to her heart; for she knew whilst she sought to hear the intelligence, which an active spectator of passing events might give, it was not now on the side of the Royalists alone that she felt a strong interest.

She was always reputed by her friends to be so whimsical, and she had, from their younger days, for ever led her playmate so weary a life from her uncertainty and her whims, that Mr. Herbert was not surprised when, instead of pursuing the theme of his adventures, in which she had seemed so wonderfully interested, she took up a volume of old songs, and recommended the invalid to reading, and to repose; "two things very easy to recommend," as Lady Arundel, who was sitting at the other end of the room, observed; "but not very easy for the sick and the sorry to adopt."

But Mr. Herbert, guessing truly that i

Blanch's purpose, as soon as ever he closed his eyes, or had begun to read, withdraw,—asked, “Have you ever heard of trying one's fortune by the *res Virgilianæ*? You smile, Blanch, my pedantry. Now do not disguise it. Father Francis taught you some thing, also;—'tis a sort of augury; and I think, as we are to part to-morrow, we had as well look into the future that way; not that I believe in it; yet wiser men than mine have done so.”

“Twere impious to defy omens,” remarked Lady Arundel, raising her head for an instant to observe how Blanch demeaned herself; “but what is this new-fangled method? Some folly of the French Court?”

“'Tis not so new, madam.” Mr. Herbert looked around him. “I would not wish our rebel guards to hear what I have to tell you; the miscreants would turn it to sad account. I was in the presence-chamber, with his majesty, when Lord Falkland, to divert the King, showed him a Virgil curiously bound. They agreed

to try their fate. Upon opening the book," continued Mr. Herbert solemnly, "his majesty's eye fell upon the imprecations of Dido against Eneas. Madam, I might repeat to you the passage—for it is indelibly fixed in my memory by the confusion and dismay into which it brought the King; but should I recite it, Blanch—"

"—I will restrain her saucy tongue," interposed Lady Arundel, "or chastise her if she indulge it. A cordial first, dear Edward—and then, the lines. Besides anything touching the King—"

"—Or Prince Maurice," interrupted Mr. Herbert, with a shy, though arch, glance at Blanch. These, madam, are the lines.

The famous passage by which even the intelligent mind of the accomplished Charles the First was depressed, and upon which his adherents placed so mournful a stress, may be spared to our readers, for the best of all reasons, in the original Latin construing which, not only respectable maternal, but revered paternal character would often make a sorry appearance, if put into competition with young gentle

of ten years of age, or upwards. But days of Charles were classical days; had been in vogue since the pen of Henry the Eighth made it fashionable; it was scarcely to be called a language in times when it was the medium of intercourse between ambassadors and monarchs, and of correspondence between the great and the great.

The lines, afterwards translated by Dryden, closed with these distiches:—

And when, at length, the cruel war shall cease,
On hard conditions shall he buy his peace.
Nor let him then enjoy supreme command,
But fall untimely by some hostile hand,
And lie unburied on the barren sand."

Edy Arundel and Blanch preserved a reverent silence, when the harmonious voice of young Herbert had ceased. Auspices and omens were to them like messages from Heaven—intelligence which it was madness to reject—impiety not to credit."

And Lord Falkland—he who had had a presentiment of all that *has*

come to pass," said Blanch, "did he tell you his fate?"

"He was in hopes," replied Herbert, "of falling upon a passage, which bearing no relation to his future life—such as one you might reasonably expect it to be,—and therefore, again opened the fatal book. It was very remarkable,—yet the brave mind ought not to fear such accidents as the turning of a leaf, or the folding of a page."

"What was it?" cried Lady Arundel.

"The verses were, as Dryden has them, these:—

' O Pallas ! thou hast fail'd thy plighted word,
To fight with caution, not to tempt the sword :
I warn'd thee, but in vain ; for well I knew,
What perils youthful ardour would pursue ;
That boiling blood would carry thee too far,
Young as thou wert in dangers, ran to war !
O curst essay of arms, disastrous doom,
Prelude of bloody fields, and fights to come !''

It will, by those who are not conversant with the peculiarities of old times, scarcely be believed how much the repetition of these verses affected the spirits of the ladies of Arundel, even during the re-

of the day. Lady Arundel scarcely
to speak of them; Blanch, even the
Blanch, was full of melancholy fore-
bodings; and, since Cecily was not pre-
sented, it was thought better not to commu-
nicate the incident which Herbert had re-
vealed to her. Not only were their own
personal interests, the lives and fortunes
of their families, the prospect either of a
stable existence in a nation torn by
civil war,—or of exile,—dependant upon
the success of the royal arms; but the af-
fection and zeal of their honest hearts
were all bound up in the cause of that
king, whose very misfortunes rendered
his presence to his party a maxim of honour.
During the evening Lady Arundel dis-
cussed her plans, or rather those which
Parliament had permitted her to form,
with her relatives. On the morrow she was
ordered to depart, under a safe-conduct,
to Bath.

Mr. Sidney, who hath been with me
to-day, and who prayed me,
to make his farewell to you—and
to you, Blanch; for he is ordered to re-

pair to London—hath provided all things needful for our journey.” Lady Arundel wiped the tears from her eyes as she added, “God grant that we may meet our kindred and friends safe, and in health! ’Tis long—very long since I have heard from my lord; but I will hope for faith without hope is of small efficacy. From what have we not been preserved?”

As Lady Arundel looked round, and as she observed the abstraction of Blanch when, at night, visiting the once happy girl in her own chamber she found her sleepless, and bathed in tears, she felt that there was no human benefit without some alloy; and that, whilst the safety and welfare of some were ensured, the peace of others was destroyed.

But Lady Arundel trusted that the evil was only temporary: she trusted to the elasticity of Blanch’s nature; to the deep interest which she felt in public affairs; to the merits and attractions of Mr. Herbert’s character and person, and to the cheerful gaiety of the hospitable Castle.

agland, wherein a sort of little Court perpetually maintained.

She is young," Lady Arundel reflect—" 'twere better not to reason, nor to se. It only confirms the obstinate, depresses the gentle. 'Tis but a preference—the fancy of an hour, y-dream—this passion of the child's Mr. Godolphin. She has seen few elevated a character, so graceful a anour. Ay! and there are few like

But my child shall not be thwart— if she like young Herbert, she shall him! — If not—yet why look into uture?"

CHAPTER II.

Let her alone, lady : as she is now, she will but disease our better mirth.

Coriolanus.

“ WHY, coz ! thou wilt forget thy speech altogether ; thou hast not uttered two words this blessed day !—wilt turn back ? Thou wert apt to chatter fast enough when we were prisoners, cousin Blanch.”

“ Nigel ! hold thy peace, and torment her not ; she is weary.—Prythee take to the parrochito which thou wert base enough to steal at Frome, lowering the honour of the family,” interrupted Cecily.

“ Why the parrochito came of his own free-will.—He’s not enlisted ; he can do no service ; he comes with me to be educated.”

“ A thriving school,” observed Lady

el; "and pray, what may be his accents?"

e can say, or sing, his paternoster; h also speak three words, 'Alas! Rodolphin!'"

think he were best sent to the ts' hall," said Lady Arundel sternly, g at Blanch; for the good lady ed that Nigel had the ready pene- which usually belongs to con- minds, most inexplicably — as of the ugliest flowers have the st smell.

would lay twenty pieces of gold to that Mistress Blanch goeth thither im," returned Nigel.

is is very idle talk, Nigel;" and Arundel began fanning herself ently as she reproved her nephew.

ladies of Wardour were, at last, their road to Ragland; with what e would that prospect have been a few months before! with what ulous anxiety on the part of some! what hopeless indifference in the of one, was it now hailed! and

when, after some days' travelling, prisoners approached the bridge of Chepstow, by what a tumult of feelings that—the debateable ground between the counties of Gloucester and Monmouth—beheld by Blanch Somerset! She regarded it as the avenue to the altar of an enforced marriage: for she entertained no doubt but that an exchange would be effected, if possible, for the benefit of Edward Herbert, and his release secured; and that release—she hated herself for dreading it,—would be followed, doubtless, by the nuptials which she and he were bound to fulfil.

The central arch of Chepstow bridge has of old been respected as neutral ground between the two counties which it separates; and now, whilst coffers and chests were carried by men to the ferry, Lady Arundel turned to thank the escort who, with a safe-conduct, had protected her from the enemy's quarters to her own beautiful, and, as yet, free country.

“Farewell!” said Lady Arundel to the rude soldiers whom her courtesy had en-

red respectful to her, and to her
nions—"farewell!" She distributed
coins, which were not refused—"I
I had more to bestow, both for
sakes, and for the honour of the
d saint, Wilfrid, whose feast it is
ay; and who never ceased his alms
enefactions. — May he watch over
hat ye return safe!" added the good
"and bear my greetings to Master
phin. Tell him I pray for him, that
ay be healed of his spiritual dis-
r—schism; as the holy saint was
mortal distemper." She paused,
egardless of the cold looks of those
she addressed, thought it right to
"for the prayers of *his* friends, and
tercession of the holy Mary, did, as
int was assured in a heavenly vision,
—and prolong his life for years! Go
ends, in peace!"
turned away; and, whilst the
ling hoofs of the horse-soldiers were
becoming fainter, as they speedily
d, Lady Arundel fixed her eyes
y on the scene before her.

Before her, swelled by the rain of autumn, flowed the Wye; here narrow and deep, here wide and shallow, and wide, becoming a tide river, lay on the opposite side, a crag, almost perpendicular, wholly bare, save where a few shrubs sprung up between the crevices or on the summits. Above this rock stood the embattled turrets of Chepstow Castle, standing on the very edge of the height, as the traveller's boat glides between the massive crags, the strong walls seem to hang over the rampart which Nature has formed in the stern precipice. Ivy, which mantles on the crumpled stones, creeps and clusters around the huge fragments, and down the side of the rock whereon the mighty fortress had its foundation.

It was three hours past noon, and the bells of the Priory of Benedictine Monks at Chepstow, were sounding for prayer, mingling their notes, to the ear of the traveller who crossed the bridge, with the sound of the waters — here very rapid, owing to the rocks at Beachley and Aust, by which the Wye, no longer clear, dashes with

ous current — and towards the port of
ostow, boats, laden with timber, iron,
tar-coal, were plying. The voices
e boatmen, in rude chorus, were echo-
nderneath the castle crags ; — their
, in some instances, having floated
a from the deep solitude and roman-
loom of Tintern, passing those narrow
of rich pasture, above which tower
wooded heights of the Wynd Cliff —
veering, with patient skill, amid the
ending currents produced by the pro-
ns, to which these simple navigators
the names, — sacred, though familiar,
in their view — of the twelve apos-

The old and picturesque bridge
with the voices of market-women,
ning from a day at Chepstow, as the
s of Arundel set foot, once more,
that well-remembered step which
o Chepstow.

“I see! I can see,” cried Lady Cecily,
Lord Glamorgan, and one whom
ould guess to be a holy father of our
ch! Blessed be the good saint Wilfred!
hose intercession we doubtless owe

this mercy!" And Cecily hastened forward as she spoke; she was the first to reach the group of friends who awaited her on the central arch — the boundary of the Somerset domain; she could not speak; she could not weep; her friends were spell-bound, until Lord Glamorgan, who received and supported her, said, in accents of respect and kindness, — "There can be no ill news to fret ye. All are well at Ragland; your lord is expected shortly."

"Knows he that we have lost our children?" exclaimed Cecily, bursting into tears. "Knows he that Walter is taken?"

"Such news have reached us, — that our Roundhead prisoners, taken at the battle of Marston, told us the sad tidings. Be of good cheer — Arundel beareth up well."

"Doth he so? — Doth he bear to think that our little Everard gave himself up as an hostage? — that my Claude, at his tender years, was carried from me? — My Father! for I perceive," added Lady Cecily, seeing that a man in ecclesiastical

me stood near to Lord Glamorgan, have much need of thy holy prayers, thy counsels ; we want strength from thee ; for our woes are greivous."

"Doff thy cap, Nigel," whispered he, as, preceded by Lady Arundel, two younger prisoners now walked to the centre arch, — " 'Tis my Lord Glamorgan."

And what is he, that *I* should bend to

"We are the elder branch," returned Nigel, keeping his cap on.

"Mercy on us ! What have pedigrees with custom ? Thou wilt affront him, Nigel."

"He can't have me tied to a whipping," argued Nigel, calmly, and holding his cap on with both hands.

— Then for the Father."

"O, he teacheth humility and enforceth my voweth it. I shall not uncover to

"Why tarries my loved aunt ?" cried she, looking back ; for Lady Arundel, leaning, with such a deep melancholy expression of countenance, over the parapet of

the bridge, that all Blanch's tender cern was aroused.

Lady Arundel's was truly that sorrow so finely described in few words — "with which the stranger intermeddles not." No sympathy could alleviate the swelling emotions with which we first view the scenes of our youth, when the joys of human prosperity have turned against us, and we feel that we know not the dark cloud which overshadows the present of our existence shall pass away. The period of our careless childhood is recalled by the images by which joys were enhanced — and sorrows, deemed endurable, become anguish in contrast.

Once only had Lady Arundel passed ere she reached the group who awaited her on the bridge. The rapid, direct course of the river, the distant aspect of the Piercefield rocks, rising like natural buttresses from the edge of the water, the white and towering cliffs of Llanfair on the side which she had left; and above all, the embattled turrets of C

stow, bursting on the sight amidst these scenes of picturesque character,—recalled, with more of bitterness than of pride, the days of her youth, the power and wealth of her family;—and a mournful foreboding that their ancient and honourable repute, the security of their possessions, perhaps,—and it was not without reason that the fear occurred to her harassed mind,—that which she prized more dearly than all these advantages,—their honour—might be overwhelmed in the general crash, was heavy at her heart.

The sight of one whom, if she loved him, she respected not, might be the source of these painful misgivings. It was true he was a kinsman—the son of a brother dearer to Lady Arundel than words could express; that he was a nobleman of excellent abilities, great valour, of most amiable and decorous manners, and of an aspect at once intelligent, manly, and surpassing in comeliness most men of his age. Such was Edward, Earl of Somerset, and afterwards of Glamorgan; even-

tually, when, full of years and his father was consigned to the grave, second Marquis of Worcester; and, that appellation, the famous author of "A Century of Inventions." Described by historians as a statesman, a philosopher, a mechanic, "and in each of his stations a mystic," this accomplished man—one of the nine sons of the first Marquis of Worcester—was the only member of his family who, in their generation, ever sacrificed his sovereign's interests to his own aggrandizement. He who adopted that system of machinery, the name, but of undoubted antiquity and expediency.

Bending courteously, even affectionately, to receive his relatives thus restored to their family, the noble figure of the Marquis, with his long chestnut hair, his high forehead, his eyes full of reflection and sweetness, his handsome features, and courtly attire,—which well became a nobleman in the prime of manhood,—might, to the thoughtless portion of his kindred, have been an occasion of pride, and self-gratulation.

Added to these attributes, like a background to a picture, the noble fortress, which Lord Glamorgan, as his father's representative, then commanded,—Chepstow, with its spacious courts, and strong towers—Chepstow, “founded on a rock,” around whose now ruined walls the ivy that clings, twines and clusters also over the cliff below—Chepstow, the castle of Richard Strongbow, the conqueror of Ireland—how must its commanding appearance have raised the human dignity of those nobles of whose possessions it was but *one*; yet that one, the key to South Wales,—the dungeon, the stronghold,—the garrison fortress of Monmouthshire!

Lady Arundel had a reasonable pride in the natural and acquired advantages hitherto possessed by her family; but her clear head was not elated by worldly possessions. She saw beneath the splendour—decay; behind the gorgeous pomp—danger. The Marquis of Worcester, her brother, was old. She dreaded the time when he should be gathered to his fathers;

for Lord Glamorgan—of dazzling, but ill-directed talents, ambitious, speculative, insincere—was, in her opinion, ill-calculated to support the reputation of a family in difficult times ; when every injudicious step might lead to a precipice ; and when the purest and richest of the aristocracy tottered on their baronial heights.

Lord Glamorgan, after the first salutations, presented to the ladies his companion as the Father Gregorio Panzani, of Arrezo ; adding, in a whisper, “ He is a secular priest who has been despatched to England by his Holiness, as an agent to mediate between the divided members of the Romish Church, who are distracted by controversy ;—as well as to sound the inclinations of the King and clergy upon the final reconciliation to the Church of Rome, which, as it is firmly believed, Archbishop Laud and others have long desired.”

The calm, thoughtful face of the Italian priest — his plain attire, the unwrinkled brow, and the spare but vigorous form, presented a lively contrast with the energetic

manner and restless glance of Lord Glamorgan; whilst the precision of the holy father's dress was almost ridiculously set off by the carelessly-disposed habiliments of the earl. Yet, dissimilar as they appeared, there was the closest bond of union between the earl and the priest,—the interests of the Church of Rome.

The party now proceeded to cross the bridge; at the foot of which, near to the castle, a litter had been provided for Lady Arundel;—but she preferred walking to the circular arch, which, connecting two round towers, forms the entrance to the first court of Chepstow Castle.

“I have walked to it often,” she observed; and, rejecting the proffered aid of Lord Glamorgan, she turned again to gaze upon the winding river—the slips of verdant pasture on the opposite side, and the lofty range of cliffs, of a concave form, below the bridge, tinted with various hues, white, yellow, red, crowned with the green foliage of oak, whilst large clusters of ivy started from the crevices of the many-coloured rock.

“All is unchanged,” Lady A observed to Father Panzani, who obsequiously behind her, “save greatness—that hath been much low England during these tumultuous ti

The Father shook his head. Her parent sympathy with her feelings to the good lady: although herself moderate yet devoted Catholic, she disapprove of the secret mission of P which, she justly thought, was related not to bring “peace, but a s and she lamented, what she termed fanaticism of her nephew, Lord morgan; reprobating the futile vours which had been made by rietta Maria to convert the King deemed such efforts, indeed, to be of peace; but not to be adopted ciously. She dreaded controversy hated dissension; and she was an in that a true Roman Catholic may be ous and sincere, without harbouring chievous designs;—a good subject, quiet, and well-meaning citizen of testant state.

As the ladies, with all due respect, attended by the Earl of Glamorgan, reached the first court of the castle, in which the hall and state apartments were situated, they were greeted by several officers of the garrison, the sons of noble families, who were, with a small portion of the troop, drawn up in array to receive the strangers with military ceremony. A body of household servants, headed by the seneschal, awaited the reception of the ladies of Wardour in the huge hall; doors flew open to welcome those who had been prisoners and wanderers, into rooms of baronial splendour, decorated with all the taste and magnificence of the Herberts, lords of Ragland, Chepstow, and Gower, to whom this once noble edifice and its dependencies had come by purchase.

“What a contrast is our present condition to our past one!” exclaimed Lady Arundel, as she was conducted by her nephew into an inner apartment, where, overpowered by her feelings, she had given vent to her tears. “Do not chide me,—

the hall, these chambers, the crowd of faithful servants, remind me of my childhood. And now," she added, rising, "my heart yearns for Ragland, for my father's home, my present, my future home. Never, in these disastrous times, perhaps, ever, will the walls of old Ragland rise again. No matter. I have sacrificed for *him*!" she added, looking down as she spoke, at an incomparable portrait of Charles, which hung, with others of his family, against the walls of the room in which she sat.

"And the princess?" continued the Duke of Arundel, moving her place, and sitting herself opposite to a portrait of the unfortunate Elizabeth Stuart, depicted by Velasquez, whose faithful pencil had given (when we consider her hapless career) an affecting portraiture of the unfortunate child in the dawn of youth;—the pale skin,—the soft, dark, melancholy eyes,—the beautiful mouth, so pensive in expression, yet so sweet, might seem to indicate that the resemblance was not far from truth after sorrow had "shaded her young

and the descendant of monarchs was condemned to earn her bread;—but that the rich, full ringlets of her nut-brown hair were decked with jewels,—her attire had the quaintness of the times,—her whole aspect was that of a girl of condition.

“Some say,” pursued Lady Arundel, still looking at the portrait, “that the fate is to be read in the countenance. There is a presage of a melancholy doom here,” and she pointed to the picture. “Sweet Princess! God grant that, whatever miseries this unhappy kingdom may witness, thou mayst be safe!”

“Rumour, my lord,” she resumed, after a long and thoughtful inspection of these youthful features, which were so exquisitely traced, “hath assigned the hand of this young fair creature to one of *our* family, at some future period. May I inquire into the truth of such report?”

“Our King,” replied Lord Somerset, well knowing that Lady Arundel alluded to an understanding which is said to have existed between the ambitious nobleman and the sovereign who was so deeply

indebted to his nobles, "is most gracious"—time will prove his Majesty's intention.

"Then you do not deny the fact," returned Lady Arundel. "My lord, rather, my dear Edward, if such honours descend upon our family, let us accept them with still truer honour by the exercise of moderation, disinterestedness. And permit us to proceed to Ragland."

She spoke with emphasis and importance, for she mistrusted her nephew's motives, and she pined for the gay society of her brother, and of the other members of her family. It was in that year that Lord Glamorgan remonstrated, and entreated that her ladyship would spend one night under his poor roof.

"There are no ladies here," was a cautious reply; "and my delicate Cecilia and my poor child, Blanch, have been enough enforced to breathe the atmosphere of garrisons and fortresses. My day is not far spent; and, with your good convoy, and with Father Panzani's good converse, the way will seem neither tedious nor dangerous."

"The passes over the Llandeny Hills are difficult, perchance perilous," interposed Lord Glamorgan.

"But I am in my native county," returned Lady Arundel, hastening to break a manchet loaf, and to swallow a glass of sherry sack. "There, nephew, I have broken bread in your house, and now let us not tarry. Let me consider: Colonel Morgan is absent you say; though Wales is quiet, loyal, incorrupt, leave not you, my lord, your post. Remember that Chepstow is the gate to Wales. What! shall not our own people suffice to guard us?—And in our native county? And from what? Not from robbers, for no one would touch a Somerset; not from the enemy, for they would not dare to venture so near to Ragland;—so, fare ye well! But where, where is Blanch?"

"She is gone," said Cecily, "to visit the citadel—to view the garden in the court beyond."

"And, I trust, to pay her morning orisons in the chapel," said Lord Glamorgan crossing himself.

“ Let us join her ; and will your ship command your servants to convey our carriages to the western entrance near the drawbridge ? ” cried Lady Adel, rising as she spoke, and issuing followed by Cecily, and joined by Mar into the court.

They passed the donjon, of Norman origin, at the south-eastern angle of the court,—the prison in which Henry M was confined ; and in the dungeon in which prisoners of war were, at that instant, immured ;—they walked into the chapel court, in the centre of which a garden was contrasted with the sombre aspect of the walls, scarcely cheering by its bright hues, for they seemed unbecomable in such a place. The door of the chapel was open, and they entered ; But he was not there ; but, in a remote recess, his hands folded in prayer, his head upraised, knelt Panzani. A gleam of light fell on his brow ;—so absorbed were his faculties that he seemed as if made of stone. He moved not, and the ladies softly retreated without perceiving that one fold of

garment had been disturbed by their entrance.

They traversed the third court in haste. Lord Glamorgan, ascending by a staircase to the battlements, paced rapidly a walk thereon, which led to the towers; and there, entranced in thought, her eyes tearfully fixed on the hills which surround Bath, the blue lines of which could just be discerned, he found Blanch, and summoned her to her impatient relatives.

"I would fain stay here," said the young girl, stretching back to catch a glimpse of the prospect on which she had gazed, as she descended to the court. "Every day I should waste hours upon the battlements."

"Chepstow would be proud to harbour my fair cousin," replied Lord Glamorgan courteously, as he conducted her, with much zeal and care, over the drawbridge which joined the two courts, and came out into a spacious and strong enclosure, which formed the garrison part of the castle, and in which the young Cavalier officers were playing at tennis.

"It is a world in itself—this castle exclaimed Blanch, riveted by the sight of the fascinating and manly game which, in some cases, the devotion of life is dedicated. "How strong the fortress!"—she looked up at the massive walls as she spoke,—“how numerous the retainers of your lordship! And the King's soldiers are here too. Ah! Chester will never be taken!”

Thus spoke Blanch, and he whom she addressed, listened to her with the profound conviction that the ancient Castle of Ragland, as still the common people call it, was invincible. Yet the gateway through which he had conducted his relatives, alone remains entire, and scarcely entire—crumbling in the noiseless decay of time. The hall, the gallery, the well-appointed sleeping-rooms, the kitchens, butteries, cellars, where are they? Who can definitely point them out? The dungeons, indeed, are to be traced; and, as you view them, enraptured with the stately grandeur of the ruined fort, your foot stumbles on an iron ring in the very centre

of a pleasant chamber—the vestige of oppression, the stay to which human beings were fastened, like brutes. But the chapel, the garden, the towers and turrets, cannot now be traced, save by the eye of the antiquarian. The portcullises, three of which strengthened the western entrance, have all been wrenched away, long since; the drawbridges remain, but the moat is choaked up with fallen stones; the very court which Blanch, in her simplicity declared to be invincible, can now be quitted only on the south side by a sallyport through the wall;—so much for civil war! Happily, though they had seen much, felt much, the ladies of Wardour little dreamed that this possession of their princely relatives would ever, could ever, be leveled in its strength and pride. Watchmen and soldiers guarded the western gate, through which they passed into a green and sloping field, now called the Castle Ditch, and terminated by the tower wall. The pleasant shade of ancient sycamores screened them from the blaze of a noon-day sun, as they paced, what is now

a fair meadow, but which is still c
the Castle Garden. It was then
pleasaunce, seated within the bounda
the walls, and graced with flow
shrubs, and trees, and terraces, and
ponds, and avenues of the topiary
and fountains, and seats, and yew
cut into fantastic forms, and ladies'
ers; — sheep and kine now enjoy the
pastures, and the Sunday rambles
the peaceful town, loiter in its
shades—for some of “the old pat
trees” remain.

Beyond, the coach, with horsemen
guard it, appropriated to Lady Aru
waited in the home park, then of
extent. Lord Glamorgan, in a su
light armour, which at that period
worn partially, and was embellished,
might be thought, with slashed sle
and vandyke collars, waited, standi
bid his relatives farewell: Panzani
hastening on to join the party, wi
black slouching hat drawn over his br
and soon, the party was arranged.

“ ’Twill be moonlight, ere you

Ragland," was the observation with which Lord Glamorgan seasoned his farewell. "The Holy Virgin and the Saints speed you! Commend me to my revered lord, my father. And do not fail, he whispered, to send me speedy tidings should his Majesty visit our house at Ragland."

The party set off, salutes were fired; the Earl of Glamorgan stood, with his plumed hat in his hand, bowing at intervals, until Lady Arundel's great lumbering coach had turned out of sight. A gallant troop of young Cavaliers, whose gay uniforms glistened with gold embroidery, and whose plumes danced in the breeze, rode before to Ragland, to speed the glad tidings of their expected arrival. They travelled over the ridge of the Devandon, looking on a country of varied beauty, untouched by the despoilers, unscathed by the vengeance of brother against brother. The blue mountains of Abergavenny — so fresh and cool, in the distance; the green downs on the south—so verdant, so smiling, so peaceful; even the very sheep, Lady Arundel

declared, were like old friends; where every shepherd touched his cap, and every village, an attached peasantry over to cheer the ladies of Wardour whose fame had reached even that remote region; for there their virtues were known.

It was, as had been predicted, twilight ere they reached the centre of that low land part of Monmouthshire, in which Ragland stands; ere they passed through the silent hamlet, and approached—when in the dark shade thrown on it, appeared a heavy, though majestic mass of shapely towers,—Ragland Castle.

CHAPTER III.

Not farre from hence, a famous castle, fine,
That Raggland hight, stands, moted almost round ;
Made of free stone, upright, as straight as line,
Whose workmanshipe in beautie doth abounde.

The curious knots, wrought all with edged tooles,
The stately tower, that looks o'er ponde and poole,
The fountain, trim, that runs both day and night,
Doth yield in show'r a rare and noble sight.

CHURCHYARDE'S *Worthies of Wales*.

“YOUR ladyship may note that ye have exchanged the sounds and accompaniments of war for the recreations of peace,” said Father Panzani, addressing Lady Arundel, as the cavalcade, leaving to the left the embattled tower of Ragland church, passed through the village, and entered the home park. “Yonder group of servants,” continued the jesuit, directing the attention of Blanch to a band of domestics with the badge of the Somersets on their sleeves, “have been hunting the otter—the nimblest of all

animals—swift as Mistress Blanch,” said the priest, with a smile.—“See!—the foremost churl is carrying the three-pronged-fork, used to pierce the animal whilst under the water; for, like a worldlyling, he oftentimes baffles the saint employed to effect his ruin.”

“You speak with zest, father, of sport,” replied Blanch, with an air of respect. “Did you ever take pleasure in worldly matters?”

“I take pleasure in them still,” replied Panzani, gently. “Look at those sportive greyhounds!—the Welshmen they are able to beat double their number of English dogs, in running over the native hills;—the English tell you that they would be at fault on the level plains of your beloved Wiltshire. Those creatures are destined to a certain duty; they have their vocation; so have we; but, think you that our especial and calling derogates from our power of enjoyment, any more than their destination—to speak as to babes, in common phrase—does from the happiness of these animals?”

"I only know," returned Blanch, submissively, yet playfully, "Father Panzani, that *I* should not be very blithesome if vowed to Heaven, whilst every thought, every hope, every wish," she blushed as she spoke,—*"are bound to earth."*

"We know not what we shall be, nor what we shall wish," answered the father, looking intently, as if perusing the innocent face of one whose hidden sentiments he had his own reasons for seeking to learn, and whose confidence, jesuit-like, he sought to gain, not by grave disquisitions, or forbidding austerity, but by the gentle display of a well-cultivated mind, of the attraction of which none knew the value, in those days, so well as they who sought to extend their empire, not only over the mind, but over the heart, and who might truly be called *"fishers of men."*

Blanch sank into an expectant silence as Lady Arundel's coach wound underneath the umbrageous oaks and beeches of the home park; and, as gay sounds struck her ear, as the notes of the pibcorn, or horn-pipe—the instrument which gave

its name to a dance, now, happily longer an essential performance of young—resounded through the deep-pled glades ; as the thrilling notes of the country's native instrument, the harp, in cadences, were heard to pour from the precincts of the castle as she approached it ; the young girl, with sudden revulsion of feeling, wept. "I have heard nothing save the kettle-drum and the trumpet of late," she whispered as if in extenuation of an unseemly weakness, to Lady Arundel,—“we are used to—to happiness.”

She checked herself, awe-struck, entering an avenue, the majestic beauty of Ragland Castle, which seemed, through intervening trees, but a shapeless mass, entranced her wonder. The dim picture which the perfect remembrance of her childhood had traced, appeared as if driven away. Expectation was overpowered by reality. There rose the majestic structure, the seat of almost princely power, the stronghold of loyalty, the central focus of the lowland part of the be-

county of Monmouth ; so that, if Chepstow might be denominated the key to South Wales, Ragland was deemed its bulwark ; the invader might in vain possess himself of Chepstow, whilst there remained so impregnable a barrier to his advances, as the stern battlements of Ragland entire ; and so thought those powers, that, whatever were their first principles of action, ended with the watch-word “ Destruction.”

The first sentiment on the approach to Ragland, in all her beauty of decay, is disappointment. The light and detached buildings of her rival sister—rival in fame, and coeval almost in calamity—Kenilworth—are contrasted in the beholder’s recollection with the strong, heavy, and compact towers which stand on a rising ground of so gradual an ascent as scarcely to be perceived. Such is the impression made upon the mind, in the present day, when civil war, which destroyed all that portion of Ragland which could afford a home for the Royalists,—which destroyed, in a great measure, her fair courts, and decreed her chapel and oratory to

ruin, has left the stately towers to guard her portals, and that massive wall to show itself in all its beauty—in many of its ancient splendour. Around are the dilapidated towers, shrouded by massy ivy, tenanted by the owl; and, in some, sometimes the abode of a peaceful hermit, the gentle footsteps of which are heard pattering through the silent corridors.

But, as the cavalcade from Chepstow approached the castle, they beheld it in all its perfection of outline, in all its splendour of accompaniments. The warriors, armed and accoutred, *point de vice*, stood proudly along the ramparts, above the deep moat, looking out upon the blue distance where even his eye could not reach the ultimate bound of the territory which proud Ragland swayed. The river was deep and flowing, bathing the castle, which encompassed the boasted city. To the south of the castle, rising five hundred feet in height, and known to the adventurous world of those times, by the appellation of the “Yellow Tower of Gwent.” As the men looked from its loop-holes, they saw below, around the tower, grassy

smoothly shaven, were enclosed by an outer wall, and adorned—such were the magnificence and ostentation of this princely abode—with statues of Roman emperors, set in niches. The citadel was connected with the main body of the castle by a drawbridge; and here, within these decorated walls, upon these grassy walks, the pensive countenance and gentle steps might be noted, of that unhappy monarch who passed his last days of kingly pomp in the Castle of Ragland, and received the last tribute of respectful hospitality from his brave and devoted servant, Henry Somerset, the first Marquis of Worcester.

Flanked by two massive towers, and faced with grey free-stone, beautifully grained and smoothed, rose the arched entrance, to which admittance was not gained until two heavy portcullises—the custom of castles of such importance—had been drawn up into their stone grooves. To the right, a tower, lower in height than the citadel, but adorned with deep machicolations, and of an octagon form, corresponded in its noble and ornate cha-

racter, and in its perfection of symmetry with the other external portions of which the Marquis of Worcester was wont to boast, whether facetiously, or with the courtesy and humility of the day,—or to deprecate the cupidity of those who coveted its corner, and thirsted to level its pride, is not less obvious—“his poor house at Ragland.” In his letters to the parliamentary besiegers, this venerable nobleman thus designated his castle nearly a third of a mile distant; a castle unparalleled for the extent of its now ruined chambers and halls, the extent of its subterranean passages and cellars,—and, it may be added, with all the strength and capacity of its dungeons. Of these there is one still disclosed to view, yawning, as the grave, for its victims, who might in vain ever attempt to climb up its sloping sides, by which, in the oubliats of Germany, they might have slid down. For its princely character, as a combination of fortress and palace, is less than for its extensive outworks of defence,—its famous horn-works, trebuchets, ramparts, bastions, Ragland might be

to outvie not only any castle of South Wales, but also any edifice, in those precarious times, still maintained in all the pristine grandeur and order of feudal days. There it stood, — not a stone of its grey towers loosened by force or time,—guarded by a garrison eight hundred strong,—served by a retinue fit for a monarch ; its galleries and hall usually lighted up to enhance the festivities of the gay and fair ; around it a magnificent demesne, laid out in all the elaborate order and skill of which we still see some faint traces in old baronial houses ; superb gardens and pleasure-grounds receiving its high-born inmates when they walked abroad. Beyond these, well-conditioned farms, denoting the wealth and liberality of the lords of Ragland ; — the rich and spreading meadows of Landeny appropriated for the maintenance of the dairy ; — still farther, an extensive tract of land, clothed with the oak and the beech, formed the home park ; whilst herds of red deer tenanted the plains and woods beyond Landeny and Cresseney : thus, in all its strength and beauty,

losing in many parts the fortress character, and presenting to the mind not but associations with peace and luxury, nothing but scenes suited to the heart, stood the home of the aged, the good, the refuge of the persecuted, the retreat of the virtuous and the learned Ragland—in its days of yore. Fair still its battlements, and rich in picturesque beauty are its courts; but broken towers, those crumbling that vast and lofty and desolate wherein are the traces of former fort, the ghosts, as it were, of bygone enjoyments—what a tale they tell! sad it is to linger in the fair enclosure to which is given the name of the Lament Court! Here Norman arches and a building of light beauty, and, at the extremity, stands, in its loneliness, a massive machicolated tower, once occupied by the garrison troops. Yet a large oriel window, with decorated tracery, bespeaks a gentler purpose for the exquisite architecture, which was always fair for the accommodation of a

soldiery; yet which could not, with all its treasures within, disarm the impetuous fury of Parliamentary vengeance.

Little did the youngest of the ladies of Wardour anticipate the day when Ragland should share the fate of its less powerful neighbour, Goodrich;—its majesty, its extent, its accompaniments, seemed to defy and to rebuke the presumption which could compass the very notion of its destruction. Proudly did Blanch look around her, as the soldiers, who manned the ramparts, lowered their arms; and when a flag was hoisted, and a salute fired from the citadel, the spirits of her elastic nature were, for an instant, elevated to ecstasy.—“And this,” she said, as she gazed at the Yellow Tower of Gwent, “is our citadel! Father Pauzani—Aunt—Cecily!—shall we not defy the—” the rebels, she would have said; but suddenly she paused, and the words died away on her lips.

“It is our home,” said Cecily, straining her eyes to see if any well-loved face might be discerned; “nothing can harm us here!”

"Yet, my children," said Lady A del, arousing herself from a deep r into which she had sunk ever since coach had entered the park, "be no much disappointed, too much dismay some drops of evil be mingled in ou of good." She crossed herself, and l up to heaven as she spoke; and Blanch could kiss the revered hand she held, and bid her aunt be of cheer, the cavalcade had entered th court of Ragland.

This was a spacious square court, in those days, and containing, in a ser apartments which ran along its ea and western sides, kitchens, on a suitable to the general magnificence castle, and other domestic offices; w on the south, a range of noble apartn such as, perhaps, the aristocracy o country has never beheld since Ra was defaced and ruined, occupied one of the court. Then, on the south rose the decorated hall, built in the of Queen Elizabeth, and dividing th courts from the second, or Fountain o

And already, for the sun had declined, lights from the interior of the hall streamed through the arched windows, and played upon the moulded and decorated window-frames; and revealed in the court groups of persons, motley in dress, and varying in station and in employments.

Ceremonies, fatiguing to those whose hearts were heavy, and whose affections were eager, were deemed essential on the alighting of Lady Arundel from the coach. The seneschal, contemporary with his lord and master, stood by the portcullis, and the court was half filled with officers and soldiers of the garrison of twelve hundred men, which the Earl of Worcester, rejecting any assistance from the impoverished resources of his sovereign, retained there. There were the paraphernalia of war, with the jocund occupations of peace, in the castle court;—here stood a group of Welsh soldiers, low in stature, with hair cut close round their eyes and ears, and armed with light weapons, in order not to impede their famed agility;—

small breastplates, bundles of arrows, light lances, their dress corresponding in lightness to their arms: whilst some were barefooted, others indulged in the costly luxury of high shoes, rudely constructed of untanned leather. Amongst the wounded, now and then, menial women dressed in the national and ancient lincolns, some of blue and white check, others of bright red. Mob-caps, gaudy handkerchiefs tied over them, sometimes a round beaver hat on the tops of these, and men's shoes, with broad buckles, composed, in the seventeenth century, still, I believe, they do, the usual costume of females of the lower ranks. Here there a blue woollen or scarlet cloak quickened the scene, and one or two peasant women from Carmarthenshire might be observed wearing over their shoulders a piece of red flannel, deeply bordered with black — an article of dress which has, in later times, since the landing of the French at Fishkard, obtained the name of "Frenchman's terror."

The soldiers were drawn up in a line

presented arms as speedily as possible the entrance of the coach, and the gauded and drooping ladies were quickly surrounded and hailed by some of the numerous and princely retinue of the Earl.

And my brother?—my Lord Worcester—how fares he in these rough times?” said Lady Arundel, striving for composure; for the remembrance of Wardour, her home, now in ruins, now dismantled and desolate, came fast upon her.—“He comes not forth to meet me!”

“Upbraid him not,” whispered Father Arundel; and he pointed, as he spoke, to the arms of the Earl of Worcester, sculptured in stone upon the walls of the great hall.—“*Mutare vel timere sperno*—I scorn to change or fear.”

“I fear no lack of welcome,” replied Lady Arundel, her voice trembling with strong emotion; “but—” She checked herself, and entered the magnificent hall as she spoke again.

The vast space of this lofty and princely hall was tenanted partially by mili-

tary. For, although of the two courts which Ragland was composed, the buildings in the second, or Fountain court, were appropriated to the garrison, garrisons of officers, who were connected by ties with the Somersets, were permitted at times to take their repasts, or to share the pastimes which were sometimes carried on in this, the rallying-place of the idle and the busy, the hungry and the merry, the young and old, and all the heterogeneous individuals who were at that time domesticated within the castle.

And now, — just before Lady Arden entered, the echoes dying away as her feet crossed the threshold, — the thrill of a harp had been heard, and the soft notes of a female voice, chanting the language of its native region, had resounded to the vaulted roof of the noble structure. The singer stood amid a tuneful band, composed of both sexes, who were assembled around an ancient bard, or harper, seated in the dignity of his office, upon the highest step of the daïs. This was a group of pennill singers, or performers who

alternately stanzas to the sound of the harp. The poems thus made vocal were handed down by memory from sire to son, and they are still fondly prized by the mountaineers, many of whom treasure hundreds within the storehouse of their brain. Choruses of these soft and beautiful strains might be heard with a loftier roof overhead than even the hall of Ragland—by the hill side, with the arched heavens alone above.

The bard, by hereditary office, of the family, doffed his round bonnet, gaily decorated with ribbons, as he rose, and looked wistfully towards Lady Arundel. He was an aged man, clothed in a close jacket, over which flowed a loose gown, trimmed with fur; a sword, tied with a sash round his waist, hung from his side. Gwyllim, for so was he called, was high in repute and office;—the herald-at-arms, who made out the pedigrees of the family—no light task in that region of long memories, of countless traditions; the minstrel, the poet—high and inspiring vocation!—and yet poor Gwyllim, in

all this worldly grandeur, was partially satisfied. He remembered when, to the gentler vocations v fulfilled, his progenitors united the embassy;—when it was the calling of the bard to appease and to prevent bloodshed; to princes to princes; to display the of oratory, and to pass, in the the battle, safe and respected, e the camp of an enemy, bearing ensignia of their privileged race, t staff, decorated with ribbons—their—
—their shield!

Lady Arundel stopped but forstant to answer the low rever the bard, in a few words of We it were ill luck to pass by the unheedingly—and a slight flush up the old dependant's cheek, struck the chords of his harp; the party, issuing through the door, entered the chapel, a full of the pennill singers was heard come, in jocund strains, the ab their homes—memory readily su

ords and tunes appropriate to such a
me.

It was now night, and the flying
columns of the chapel, which supported
arched roof, rising from grotesque
ords, and all the delicate tracery which
ght then be visible, could but dimly
discerned. At the extremity of the
red edifice, candles, placed on the
ar, revealed two reclining figures in
ne. Towards these Lady Arundel
at her steps. They were the monu-
mental effigies of her parents;—and, if
er there is a period when the de-
ted, to whom we owe our birth, are
e most fondly recalled, it is when
amities have crossed our path in life;
en the remembrance of their aid, and
npathy, and protection, mingle with
e sentiment that they are at rest, and
ow not of the gloom, the care, the
pelessness, which shroud those whom
ey have quitted, and who still suffer
re.

Lady Arundel, and her young and mute
atives, bent the knee in prayer. No

duty could, in their minds, supersede. The escort of well-born and prosperous kindred bowed down their heads, some near the flickering lights of the half-illumined altar, some in the side chapels. Pauzani prayed long and devoutly. A deep silence prevailed in the fabric, whose exquisite sculpture and ornaments can now scarcely be traced. At length, slowly, silently separating from their attendants, even from Pausani, three ladies withdrew through a passage which opened into a well-known tower, a private passage, to one of the state apartments. Pausani vanished through the opposite door, and the escort quickly turned to the hall; where, in the game of chess, in that of 'tables,' since the backgammon, in the charms of the pennillion,* or in the yet more entrancing pleasures of the table, they forgot that evening, the flight of time.

* Sir Samuel Merrick has given an interesting account of the pennill singers, and of the pennillion, in his history of Cardiganshire.

CHAPTER IV.

For truth I may this sentence tell,
No man dies ill that liveth well.

HERRICK.

“MOTHER!” exclaimed a manly but
impetuous voice, as Lady Arundel, thread-
ing her way through intricate and gloomy
passages, opened a door in the arras, and
stepped suddenly into a small secluded
chamber. “Mother! my—my own Ce-
cily!” And with these words the gallant
Colonel Arundel clasped his wife in his
arms; kneeling down, after that first fond
embrace, to ask, according to the custom
of old times, a blessing from Lady Arundel.
It was given and received in silence.
Both mother and son felt that too much
had occurred since they had parted; the
past had gone over their heads; the iron
had entered their souls; there was no
power of words. Cecily was the first to

break through that too expressive sigh and to exclaim—"Oh, Henry! where are our children? Childless! Henry, turn to you—"

"Our children?" exclaimed C. Arundel, springing up. "Curses upon those who—" he stopped short; his clenched hands fell powerless by his side; his eyes, spite of a violent effort, were moistened with tears. He dashed them away, and, breaking out of his wife's grasp, he walked perturbed about the room. Then, abruptly stopping, he said solemnly, "It becomes not him whom God hath chastened, to revile a curse! No! even He who bore the cross gave blessings, not revilings. Mother!"—he hurried towards her, and spoke, as if to impart some intelligence, but on looking into his mother's face his resolution was driven to flight; the knees which held hers trembled, and damp sweat stood on his forehead.

"My son, thou art weatherbeaten, worn, and wearied, as all in these times must be. How fares my lord, your father?"

"Well,—my mother! well!" replied Colonel Arundel, turning away his head, whilst the caresses of Cecily, clinging to him, were unheeded.

"Is he with the Prince?—with the Duke Maurice?" asked Lady Arundel, quickly; "they say the forces marched the other day towards Marshfield, and are to halt there, near Bath. 'Bides my lord with the Prince? Oh Henry—Oh my son! Has aught befallen him? Is my son safe? Is he with Prince Maurice? 'Bides he with the prince?"

She spoke very hurriedly; there needed few words for the reply—one look sufficed; the solemn, silent look from the countenance, whose every expression the mother well knew how to read.

"There has been an engagement? He is dead! gone! slain!" said Lady Arundel, gazing at her son, yet speaking with composure, though with a rapidity, that shocked the bystanders, as almost something unnatural. "How fell he? where? Henry, speak! I am resolute—composed I can bear *all*!" Lady Arundel sank

back, half fainting as she spoke; her son threw himself on his knees before her.

"My dear mother, if duty, affection, or any thing can avail to comfort you,—nay, more, my mother, he raised his voice, though it trembled,—
"your son will do honour to his father's memory. I will avenge our wrongs, my father hath fallen!"

"How?" exclaimed Lady Arundel, releasing herself from the support of her daughter-in-law, and sitting quite upright, whilst the light gleamed on a face which looked now, as her son mournfully gazed upon it, aged and haggard. The word was uttered in a whisper; but, in the deep silence of the apartment, it had a startling and fearful effect.

"The Prince, madam," answered Colonel Arundel, recovering his composure as his mind reverted to the great business of the day, gave Sir William Waller a meeting near Marshfield, five miles beyond the Bath, on the Lansdown; the enemy charged the King's horse, who were beaten to an advantage; they were discomfited and—"

—Turned *they* from the enemy, who never turned before?" cried Blanch, spring forward; for private calamity was heightened beyond endurance by public disgrace, in the minds of all enthusiastic patriots.

"No!" exclaimed Colonel Arundel, promptly. "Prince Maurice and the Earl of Carnarvon, rallying their horse, and joining them with the Cornish musketeers, charged the enemy's horse again, routed them, and drove them to a part of the ground wholly inaccessible; and my father's troop—" Colonel Arundel paused; the excitement of the moment died away; he could not proceed.

They turned not? *they* fought well? for arms—the king's cause—how went the battle?" exclaimed Lady Arundel, with a cry of anguish; "Your father's name is not dishonoured? speak—speak—"

"The king's servants had the day," replied Colonel Arundel, "and a smile played upon his face for an instant. "My father died, madam, as became him. As

he charged a body of cuirassiers, led by the rebel Harebriggs—the first, men that were ever seen so perfectly armoured on either side, and who made a great impression of fear on our men;—as he rode hastily, —attended by the matchless Bevil Grenvil on the one side, and Nicholas Stanning and his musketeers on the other, a brace of bullets from a cannon penetrated his side.”

“—It was not long!” asked Lady Arundel, whose head fell upon her knees. “He hath not endured much pain!”

“—Spoke he anything?” said Bevil, vainly endeavouring by her endeavours to comfort her who had sunk under the blow, as if stricken by a thunder-bolt. “Hath he commended himself to God, those he loved?”

“Hath he commended himself to God?” said Lady Arundel, slowly raising her head, and fixing her eyes upon her son. “Was there time?”

“After his wound, my mother,

the short interval between his wound and his death, my lord asked a nobleman who attended him, how the king's affairs prospered? His friend answered, 'Well;'—and then thought it his duty to inquire whether my father had any final request to make to the King; 'I will not say,' said my lord, 'with a suit in my mouth to any king, save to the King of Heaven!'

"Like himself unto the last," exclaimed Lady Arundel. "My children, do not attempt to comfort me, *that* is comfort enough for me. Give your tears vent! let them flow for the memory of one who loved us—loved ye all!"

While she spoke, the door in the arras slowly opened, and a personage of unusual height, and of a robust and majestic figure, walked in and stood contemplating the group. The fine, capacious forehead, arched eye-brows, well-proportioned mouth, and aquiline, though somewhat too prominent, nose, which marked the countenance of this individual, bespoke the well known attributes

of the Somerset family. Years scarcely dimmed the small bright eyes which had witnessed many changes in this sublunary state; age had not diminished the dignity of his athletic frame, whilst a costly and somewhat ostentatious mode of attire gave to his appearance a certain picturesque peculiarity not devoid of grace.

Henry Somerset, then earl, afterwards Marquis of Worcester, and the ancestor of the Ragland, the ancestor of the house of Beaufort, not to enumerate his honours, was arrayed in a tight white cloth, buttoned close down the front, with a tight sleeve, surmounted by an epaulet of striped satin: a plain collar, with a broad hem, suitable to advanced age—for, though the eyes bore the aspect of sixty, he had not attained his eightieth year—was worn by him in preference to the frippery of a Vandyke cambric, then in vogue, and the cuffs, which were turned back, showed a muscular and powerful hand, unimpeded by the collar. Over

holders was thrown a dark velvet
k with loose sleeves: and a full skirt,
ously embroidered with rows of pearls,
g in massy folds below his doublet—
the earl still looked contemptuously
n the fashion just introduced, of sub-
stituting the trowsers for the petticoat.
one hand, Lord Worcester held a hat
ished with three white feathers, and
rcled with a jewelled band; in the
er, an embroidered glove; the
ness and studied appearance of his
ship's dress denoting that some guest
guests of high degree claimed the
ntion and courtesy of a careful cos-
e on his part. But it was not in the
er of adventitious circumstances to
art, or in any way to withdraw, that
rn, though calm, loftiness of manner
istinct from pride, as it was free from
alance—that easy, though quiet grace,
tured by jocularly, which charac-
zed the habitual deportment of the

le moved forward into the circle: and,
st a kind embrace denoted the terms

of affection on which he lived with his sister, Lady Arundel, the benignant manner in which placing his hand upon the heads of his kneeling kinswomen, and Blanch, and the hearty, thoughtful gesture with which he grasped the hand of Arundel, showed the kindness and affections which prevailed in that family, in which he was the high representative. Whilst a certain philosophic coolness was imparted perhaps by "old experience," he was not partaking of the callousness of a hardened or aged man, nor derived from worldliness—
—for few of the great nobles of that time displayed a more chivalric enthusiasm than the Earl of Worcester—the old man well; for it seemed as if he had ceased to wonder at the changes and chances which affrighted and astounded less tempered minds; and his spirits so equalised, yet so unsubdued, he was well prepared to encounter that last change, which he, who had now advanced in his journey to life's end, might reasonably contemplate as his hand.

But see how God tempers mercy, chastening!" said the earl, after proferring to Lady Arundel such fraternal consolation as her loss suggested. "We have you here, amongst us!—Ragland is large enough to contain you all; and, Lady Cecily, wot you of any others, who would fain quarter in our poor house?"

"My boys! my poor Everard! my little Claude!" exclaimed Cecily, wringing her hands, and looking up piteously at her brother and.

"Trust!" said the earl emphatically; "they shall yet be restored to ye—and those who cannot be restored; for those who are at rest above, remember, my dear, they are in that haven where you will be must soon, ay, we know not how soon, be summoned; they are safe! No thunder-clouds can break over their heads now. Look up, sister! What matter it whether we battle out life a few years sooner or later? It matters not to him who has played his part well, and who need fear meeting neither

Roundhead nor Presbyterian where gone!"

He spoke with a smile; yet the voice of Henry Somerset trembled. He loved and prized the virtues of Elizabeth of Arundel—the sister, whose hand he had even at that moment, formed the centre of courtly circles, and had been honoured by the especial approbation of the king. He loved the sister—one of a family of thirteen brothers and sisters, of which the earl was the second. An early possession of power and wealth had hardened his heart. He had succeeded when old, to the princely territory he possessed, and which became his by the death of his elder brother. Since his accession to the title, retirement had been his choice; yet, when the civil war broke out, the earl had been the first noble to raise a troop of horse for Majesty's service. At his own expense he had conducted the king safely to Oxford: also, at his own expense, levied small armies in Wales, unhappily engaged to his son, Lord Glamorgan, the

successful of generals. Yet, though conscious of his importance, the earl was almost humble, the least exacting, of those who maintained the King's cause. It was his public character: his private virtues were of the good old-fashioned sort,—truth, liberality, piety. Although a Roman Catholic, he was without bigotry—I cannot add, without superstition; for superstition is the mortar which keeps the stones of the Romish church together. The mild policy of Charles towards the Roman Catholics was a policy which his enemies construed as leaning to that faith—had a salutary influence in calming the passions of the people. Many were the Catholics who loved their ancient faith truly, but who abhorred the intrigues, dissensions, and dissipation at power, by which much odium was affixed to the conscientious adherents of the Church of Rome.

In deep affliction, yet not in sorrow which could reject the consolations of religion, Lady Arundel was supported in her sleeping apartment by her son;

Cecily and Blanch, that night, were tiring-women; no attendant was to approach the mourner. And long did Blanch watch by the bed of her bereaved aunt, leaning her head down on the pillow to kiss her wan cheek, or kneeling down to utter some prayer of consolation, or when sleep would not come, to gaze at the fair picture of future happiness—all in vain. The blow was well sustained, but it was never recovered.

CHAPTER V.

Turne o'er the annals past, and where
Happie auspicious dayes appeare,
Marked with the whiter stone, that cast
On the dark brow of th' ages past
A dazzling luster, let them shine
In this succeeding circle's twine
Till it be round with glories spread;
Then with it crowne our Charles his head.

CAREW.

STERN was the conflict between human
row and heavenly consolations; and
any weeks elapsed before Lady Arundel,
othed by the calm and enlightened ad-
monitions of Father Pauzani, and by the
hortations and prayers of her private
nfessor, recovered from the calamity.
he evening, Blanch hung over her aunt's
low, bathed in tears, and listened for
e sounds of peaceful sleep:—a taper
rew up its pale rays into the lofty
om wherein Lady Arundel lay, lighting

up, very dimly and partially, the canopy of the bed, and revealing its plumes and feathers at each corner, its earl's coronet at the tester, and the emblazoned arms which were wrought at the head. Alas! not all these gauds, these ancestral honours, could soothe one instant the throbbing heart of her who slept no more in the home of her fathers.

Blanch was superstitious; and when the night advancing, a deep silence pervaded the castle, and nothing was heard save the voices of the sentinels on the ramparts at intervals giving the word—the favourite watch-word of the Papists, afterwards used at the battle of Naseby—"Queen Mary"—when even those voices as the midnight hour drew on, became fainter, and Blanch, looking round her, felt the loneliness of the apartment, the solemnity of the hour; her memory called up the impressions of her childhood days, when she, a plaything of the family, had sat in the evenings near the warm fire of the old remote nursery, and heard the maidens employed to attend upon

The children tell of the Teulu—a phantasmagoric representation of a funeral—believed in by the Welsh, who see, by participation, the spirits of those who are appointed to do honour to the newly dead, and hear them singing masses and anthems for the departed; and the awful question, often mentally urged, whether the released spirit be conscious of our doings in the flesh—Where wanders it? How fares the ghost so lately released from its earthly tenement?—occurred to the shuddering and superstitious girl. She would fain have slept; she would fain have thrown herself by her aunt's side; but that fear kept her spell-bound, and she dared not to move through that still and gloomy apartment.

Grey dawn streamed at length through the oriel window, near which she crept when the first glimmer of light appeared; her spirits were then almost too much exhausted to let her sleep: she told her fears, and looked down into the court. The garrison was astir: Blanch gazed into the Fountain court, where the spark-

ling waters played, catching the beams of the now forthcoming sun they fell. There were indications of preparation either for defence or sally; the siege of Wardour, and all that happened since that event, were brought back to the mind of Blanch. And presently, a gun fired from one of the parts was followed by another, and another. In an instant, the artillery from every part of the castle was heard, resounding through the courts in measured volleys; then it suddenly became dumb;—the soldiers marched out into the great court—was silent and deserted—no object remained in the court, except the bright waters of the fountain, now like diamonds in the full effulgence of the morning sunbeams.

Lady Arundel awoke with a start. She heard the cannonade—what matters?" she muttered, "what matters it now? The castle can do him no more hurt now!—and of two thousand men who stood on Lambourton that morning, scarce two hundred were left at noon! Come hither, Blanch.

an, as thou wouldst have thy mother's blessing, a recreant from his allegiance. My child! be true to thy faith—to thy sovereign! Blanch! if ever thou hast a parent's weakness in thy young heart, remember thy uncle!"

"And wherefore?"——Blanch began. "How chill and trembling this hand is!" interrupted Lady Arundel, rising, and looking mournfully at her niece. "Thou art too young, child, to taste of all the sorrows thou *hast* seen. Hie thee to rest, and leave me to weep alone!"

"But, madam," replied Blanch, "I cannot sleep. 'Tis not three o' the clock, and I hear footsteps in the gallery. The horn at the gate was thrice rung whilst thou slept;—yes, mother, you *did* sleep!" added Blanch, with a sweet smile. "And mark! the harp sounds in the gallery;—I must—I must ask Gwyllim what means this unusual rout. Noted you my uncle's revelry last night?"

"I have not the free heart and the young eyes to note such matters," replied Lady Arundel, sighing. "My thoughts,"

she said, involuntarily, "are with unburied and unhonoured dead on field. Blessings on brave Hopton! Blessings on him who gave those poor remnant a grave!—though not at home," murmured Lady Arundel, folding her hands as if in prayer, and raising her eyes to a large crucifix placed at the foot of her bed.

Her orisons were not interrupted though Blanch had returned to her side, from a quick sally into the garden some minutes before they were concluded. On the contrary, the young, devout girl knelt by the crucifix until her aunt's voice, calm, though sad, interrogated her as to the cause of the commotion in the castle. Then Blanch started up from her knees, and hastened with flushed cheeks to her aunt.

"It is the King!" she whispered, in much excitement of manner. "His Majesty, aunt! That ever I should live under the same roof with his Majesty—that Ragland should be thus honoured! He comes thus betimes, for the mar-

all infested by Roundheads. I mean
mean "——

—Name them as thou didst," said Lady
Arundel, looking at her almost sternly.

And he 'bides here to-morrow, per-
haps longer. O madam! O my dear
Lord Arundel! there's my Lord Linde-
—there's the brave Newcastle! O
—were we not thus chastised and
—down by my honoured uncle's death,
—it could pleasure us more than to see
—brave, the loyal, the comely"——

—But thou must have no eyes for any
these gallants," interposed Lady Arun-
—with an anxious glance at her niece.
—thou art betrothed, Blanch! I would I
—be at rest; my mind misgives me; and
—something whispers me that thou wilt
—bring to my few remaining years much
—grief. Speak not of these Cavaliers!—
—rep not, my heart!" added Lady Arun-
—after a pause. "I am not chiding
—; I only speak to warn. O Blanch!
—when we look at death, when we muse
—on the loss of others, we know for a
—that there is nought to be prized

save good report, good faith, submission. My child, why weepest thou?"

"I will bid Cecily come to you, mother," answered Blanch. "She is more worthy—I would say, more able—to attend you. I am not well!" and she rushed from the chamber.

"—He is a mortal god," saith old Fuller, speaking of the kingly attributes; and many there were, who still, whilst rebellion was rapidly spreading over the counties of England, entertained the same notions of that monarch, who would not loose, yet could not hold, the reins of government. Quietly, almost furtively, had Charles marched from Chepstow, although accompanied by a large body of horse, until he arrived within the precincts of the castle of Ragland; then, several of the most distinguished of those noblemen, commanders, and adherents, who were scattered about here and there, adding to the valorous and victorious army of the West, fell in with the procession which collected to do the king honour.

It was a gallant, and unparalleled assemblage. Peers, who had mortgaged their lands to obtain sums which they had cheerfully lent to the king,—and had fortified their houses and castles with garrisons composed of their trained and armed tenantry, rode at the head of troops which received no pay, maintained by yeomen and burgesses, each private providing his own horse, and paying his expenses. Many of the officers had already, in this gloomy crisis, seen every member of their kindred who could bear arms, cut off in the course of that grand quarrel which had but partly run its course. Out of three brothers, one, perhaps, of a race, alone was left. Many a son, with a black scarf over his shoulder, with diminished troops, and impoverished fortune, was heading his late father's gallant forces;—worn and withered faces, stamped with care, and disfigured with wounds, were seen, ever and anon, like spectres among the living, casting a shade of despair around them, and contrasting sadly with the gay and buoyant

air, and untried vigour of those who knew not Edge-Hill and Lansdown.

First—after the heralds—came Charles; he rode with his accustomed grace, his charger curveting over the green-sward of the home park, and preceding as fine and picked a body of horse as ever rallied round a monarch,—or lay mangled and mutilated on a plain. Gay and *débonnaire*, as if resorting to a bridal feast, looked the King to those who knew not the variations of his once placid, but, in his latter days, painfully expressive countenance. His dress was choice that morning, not all military, nor yet like the summer habiliments of peace. He wore, indeed, a suit of complete armour, but relieved by a plain cambric collar, turned over; and his warlike costume was degraded—as some might think it—by the inconsistency of a black Spanish hat, adorned with three drooping feathers, instead of a helmet, on his head. Thus, the lofty and wide forehead, and long eye-brows of the accomplished monarch were becomingly exhibited; and the soft,

hazel eyes asserted their remarkable power upon all who met their gaze. For the disposition of Charles was told in the pensive expression of his countenance. A mouth of decided beauty, and of such sweetness in its smile, that even the imperfect and hesitating accents which it uttered, had their charm, gave to the face of the monarch the title to comeliness, which neither the form of the lower part of his visage, nor of his nose, would have obtained for this, the most interesting and most unfortunate of England's princes. And then, the habits of a mind so cultured, and so refined, as to have had a singular influence upon the nobility who adored him;—the early piety, which had caused his brother Henry, in boyhood, to snatch up the mitre of the primate, and, putting it on his head, to tell him, that “he would one day make him Archbishop of Canterbury:”—the skill in limning and music,—the love of classics,—the taste for medals,—all left their impress upon the thoughtful, and, in early life, somewhat unvarying

physiognomy of one who was destined to see all whom he loved snatched from him, and who was thrown back upon these resources to lighten the "dark hour."

But Time, the chastener, had wrought a marvellous change in Charles, since, with the alertness of one quick in apprehension, though defective in judgment, he painted under the guidance of Vandyke, or played with the mechanism of watches or clocks, which he perfectly understood, with Elias Allen, who made the first horizontal sun-dial ever seen in England. It is true, the figure of the monarch, now in his forty-first year, had no longer the elasticity of the prince, who, mastering his natural infirmities, and by the dint of study, had gained a superiority, even in those days, in every variety of active amusement;—it is true the complexion of the King, once fair and clear, was now embrowned, and, what was worse, reddened, by exposure to the elements;—it is true, that his hair, unlike the sedulously-curled locks of his courtiers, hung about care-

lessly in one long curl, which “shelved,”—to use old Antony Wood’s phrase—over his left shoulder, flying about in the wind;—it is true, the steed that he loved, and on which he rode gracefully, was no longer the proud pampered creature, that Vandycke had painted in its splendour, when Buckingham held the bridle;—yet still, the King’s appearance, unlikely, as it may seem,—was far more manly, more engaging, even more dignified than in his days of prosperous ease, before Strafford, the pioneer of his master’s doom, had bled, or rebellion had been proclaimed.

For time, and the events of a disastrous life, had checked those propensities to evil which are asserted to have manifested themselves, even in the cradle of Charles the First, and which are declared by Lilly, the astrologer, to have disturbed Queen Anne, his mother, and the old Scottish nurse, who, unnatural as she was, and unlike her class, left it on record, that her princely charge was of “a very evil nature in his infancy.” Time and

trial had, at this epoch of the doomed monarch's life, subdued that which the croaking old woman had observed, and, probably, fostered: a temper mild and patient had been grafted upon the wilfulness of his youth — a sense of obligations, forced out by the pressure of troubles, had succeeded to the unthankfulness and want of private faith which are the besetting sins of the prosperous and the flattered:—active habits, and their effect—an heroic power of facing danger, and of bearing troubles—had been induced in the place of a somewhat effeminate elegance of mind and over-minuteness of pursuits which belong to the privacy of life—and even in that should not unduly be valued—but which were ill-adapted for an English sovereign.

Manly, calm, almost majestic, the King rode, surrounded by the flower of his realm, with an animation of manner and energy of discourse that few, who had known Charles in his happier days, could have credited. As he went along, the state of the country, its peculiar capa-

bility for defence, in its *then* wild fastnesses;—the strength of its proud fortresses;—the simplicity, yet determination of its people, had been the themes of the King's discourse. As he advanced towards Ragland, which he had never previously visited, old prepossessions for all that is beautiful and grand—the romantic and poetic part of the King's nature—his feelings as an Englishman, his pride as a monarch, were all aroused. He checked his horse's speed, and gazed in silence, yet with the reflective gaze of one whose practised eye can define to the mind the beauties on which it looks, and trace their origin in the combinations of skill;—but, though silent, with a scarcely-repressed enthusiasm, upon the commanding towers whose portals were opened to welcome their sovereign.

"'Tis a goodly edifice!" were the few words which Charles spoke, ere he spurred on his horse and rode, his white feathers dancing in the wind, towards the citadel. "And what bastions!—

what a fosse!—what outworks are these! James,” pursued the King, addressing, in this familiar manner, his intimate associate the Duke of Richmond, who rode beside him.—“ Yet not so strong as Chepstow,” pursued the King, musing, and fixing the eye of a connoisseur upon the grand embattled towers which rose proudly above the moat, which he now approached.

The nobleman thus honoured by Charles’s familiarity presented in his aspect a decided contrast to the monarch, although the nearest in blood, and the next in succession to the King in default of male heirs to the crown;—the godson of King James,—educated by King Charles, and promoted to the offices of lord chamberlain, and lord steward of the household, James Stuart, Duke of Richmond, lived but for the sovereign to whom he owed his safety and his prosperity—blessings which his unhappy relative, the Lady Arabella Stuart, had coveted in vain. And the duke repaid the generous confidence and liberality of

Charles by a devotion so romantic and remarkable as to challenge all parallel,—offering, when the great sacrifice to the nation was subsequently made, his own life, vicariously, as it is expressed, for his sovereign. The generous endeavour to die instead of Charles, was in vain; but not in vain was the devotion of his previous days,—the gift of his fortune to the great cause,—the death of three brave brothers in the field;—the last offices, when the grave had not closed over the remains of Charles, to place them in the vault of Windsor, and to guard them with his sword to their resting-place.

Plain in countenance, with light lank hair, and an expression of great determination and decision, James Stuart, who was so punctual in points of honour, as to be deemed the model of chivalric virtue,—displayed, as he rode on the right hand of Charles, the virtue of gratitude to one who could not repay the lord steward with any additional honours. At the heels of his horse bounded a grey-

hound, the duke's inseparable companion; for the animal, faithful, like his master, had preserved the lord-steward's life, by awakening him, when, in foreign travel, the duke's life having been attempted by assassins; and the master and the creature, thus indissolubly united by bonds of affection, were parted only by death.

"And that," said the King, pointing with his field-marshal's baton to the great Tower of Gwent, "is the deposit of my Lord of Worcester's often-vaunted treasure.—'Twill be the last in the country, ere long, I wot, James."

"—Not whilst your majesty retains so many faithful subjects, and hath such spirit and nerve to guide and govern them," replied the duke, cautiously.

"—Not if we can bring the Parliament and our misguided subjects into terms of peace," returned Charles, in a tone of more decision than he was wont to employ. "Trust me, James, 'tis a princely alchemy to extract out of honourable wars a necessary peace." The King sighed as he added, "Blessedness is pro-

mised to the peace-maker, not to the conqueror."

"Ay, sir," rejoined the Duke of Richmond, "but 'tis a happy state whose chief hath a peaceful heart and a martial hand, able both to use peace and to avenge war."

"I have not known such health of body and contentment, James," resumed the King, after a thoughtful silence, "for many a year, as since I cast off all accustomed delicacies, and became a soldier!" And Charles spurred on his steed, and rode gallantly and gaily forward as he spoke, his troop behind him putting themselves into a brisk trot. There was something fine in witnessing the effects of hardy habits, and of a determined spirit, upon a frame originally feeble;—something gratifying in seeing the triumph of mind over physical evils;—much to admire in the superiority of the spirit to the flesh.

"But see! my Lord of Worcester, below the draw-bridge, to welcome us," said the King, slackening his pace, and

reassuming the calm aspect which becomes habitual to him who plays the first part in the game of life. He bowed courteously to the officers of the castle-guard, who were drawn up in array to receive his majesty, not omitting to return the greetings of an assemblage of country-people, who, in their gala dresses, were thronging to witness their sovereign.

“Monarch of Wales! James,” whispered Charles with a smile, as he glanced at the graceful and unbent figure of the Earl of Worcester, surrounded by the different members of his family, and set off by a back-ground composed of the officers of his household, over whom his tall form towered like a lofty pine among the forest-trees.

And now salutes and volleys from the battlements, trumpets, hautbois, cymbals, and cornets drowned the first greetings between the King and his servant under the arched gates of the castle;—yet with what courtly dumb show was the proud occasion graced! how elegantly

did Charles alight from his charger! how becoming, yet how dignified, was the gesture of the marquis, as he bent his knee to the ground, and, kissing his majesty's hand, said, with the deepest respect, "Sire, I am not worthy!"

"My lord," replied the King, raising his loyal servant from his lowly posture, "I may well answer you that 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,'"—alluding to the ample loans which the Royalist cause had received from the earl;—and, as the King spoke, the reference to his own precarious, unkingly, and dependent condition caused his voice to tremble, and the devotion of the earl was felt, not without a sentiment of pain.

"Then," said the Earl of Worcester, in a loud voice, and looking around him—and his eye rested upon a numerous kindred, upon an attached peasantry—"your majesty will, I hope, prove a defender of the faith." He spoke jocularly; for, even in the presence of royalty, the old nobleman could not restrain the dis-

position to make merry, nor curb the conviction that Nature had added to her other endowments the gift of wit. Yet the phrase had a deeper and more serious meaning than a mere fanciful play upon the word faith; and a suppressed murmur of approval from the Catholic kindred, who stood near the portal, explained their sentiments.

“To you, my lord,” replied the King, taking no notice of the applause which followed the speech of his host,—“to you, my lord, we are indebted for prompt and timely aid. We knew your loyalty and generosity, and in person proffer you our thanks.”

“O, sir!” cried the earl, overcome by this condescension and courtesy,—“I had your majesty’s word for my security, but I thought not that I should be so soon repaid.” The old man paused, wiped a tear from his eye, and added, with much emotion—“For, since I have my Royal Master’s gracious thanks, I have all I look for. And now,” he resumed, after following this speech with a low obeisance,

"may it please your majesty to enter, and to visit my poor house of Raglan?"

"Yes, my lord, anon; but we have brought part payment of our debt," returned the King, smiling, as his mild, soft eye was fixed upon the countenance of the marquis: — "witness, James Stuart, to the same." The King looked back among the gallant dragoons, who were now halting at a respectful distance from his majesty. His eye ran through the ranks until at last it fixed a kind, though searching, gaze, upon a young officer, who, at a signal from the King, rode speedily up to the spot whereon the monarch stood. To alight from his horse, and to throw himself at Charles's feet, was to the youth, armed even as he was, but the work of an instant.

"Rise, Captain Edward Herbert," said the King, kindly, laying his hand for an instant upon the young officer's shoulder, "and pay your duty *there*!" He pointed to the Marquis of Worcester as he spoke.

"This is a young gentleman, my lord," said the King, whilst Edward Herbert

bent one knee before his aged and noble kinsman and craved a blessing,—“this is a young gentleman, as thou, James, knowest, who, scarcely out of his boyhood, signalized himself by no mean action at Roundway Down. He was wounded, made prisoner, and lodged in the governor’s house at the Bath. He might have had his liberty sooner, but he liked not the conditions.”

“As how?” asked the marquis, whose eye sparkled, and whose face was flushed, with the pleasure of seeing before him, restored, a favourite relative, brought up chiefly under the marquis’s charge, and for whose imprisonment many a lament had been said (and even sung by Gwyllim) at Ragland:—“and wherefore, rash one—”

“Chide him not,” interposed Charles. “The conditions were, that our young captain—he hath a company since yesterday)—should, upon his parole, not bear arms against the Parliament for two years. Master Herbert preferred his prison fare to such conditions. Was it not so, James?”

“ Yes, sire. Nor was the fare unaccompanied with grace,” replied the lord steward, his features relaxing into a grim smile.

“ Doubtless,” said the King, somewhat gravely; for whilst the custom of the day rendered it, even in polite circles, not inapt to quote Scripture, as his majesty had done upon his arrival, Charles ever repressed any ridicule of the overdone and ill-judged devotional observances of the Puritans, greatly as he disliked their tenets.

“ How your lordship’s young kinsman was enabled to return to our service,” resumed the King, “ shall be our fireside discourse at some future opportunity. He is—he is,” added Charles, with a smile, looking at the fine uncovered head and noble form of the young Cavalier,—“ able to do our cause some service yet, I reckon. He hath a look, my lord, of the Somersets,” whispered the King to the marquis, as they walked slowly under the portcullises and entered the front court of the castle; where, with ceremonials to

which the warm heart of the old marquis gave a character of cordial welcome, while his high-bred courtesy enhanced every due observance, Charles the First was ushered to the splendid state-apartments, to which the magnificent owner of the castle had added largely since Ragland had come into his possession.

CHAPTER VI.

He is a gentleman in a text letter, because bred and living in a larger way.—*The true Nobleman.*

FULLER'S *Holy and Profane State.*

THE hall of Ragland, at noon-day, was a moving and interesting scene; an epitome of all that then engaged the thoughts of Englishmen—the court, and the camp. By the side of a long table, upon which, at one end, was placed a chess-board, stood a comely boy about thirteen; but who, from his loquacity, and the forwardness of his manners, might naturally have been conjectured to have attained a much more advanced period. The features of this child were large, but not unpleasing; large, sleepy, dark eyes, and a full mouth,—the under lip projecting, a broad forehead, over which the hair was cut short, and plain in front, though it hung down low behind, in clustering curls; a ruddy though dark complexion—denoted not that pecu-

liarity, and expressive, though decided, plainness which the physiognomy of Prince Charles Stuart, in after life, bronzed by foreign suns, and marked by the indulgence of debasing passions, eventually presented. At this early age the Prince was robust and manly; the tight leathern jerkin which confined his boyish figure was well filled out, and the richness with which the other parts of his dress were composed became him: his sleeves were each tied round with scarfs of scarlet satin, edged with gold; a deep band of the same texture, and ornamented similarly, was hung over one shoulder, and fastened round his waist behind. Trousers of scarlet velvet, also trimmed with gold, descended to the diamond buckles on his feet, and cuffs of rich point lace, vandyked, hung over the fair fat hands, one of which held a dove, fastened with a link of gold to a ring on the prince's little finger.

The prince was watching, or trying to watch, two chess players, engaged in that game, which his capacity was not as yet ripe enough — as old John Lydgate has

done—to compare to an “amorous war;” he looked, for a little time, at the pieces, beautifully formed in silver and gold, and commended, with the grace and courtesy which he had derived from his mother, their curious workmanship; next he praised the skill of the combatants. “Well done, George Wharton; well done, my Lord Lindesay,” he added, with greater deference; but he turned, a moment afterwards, boy like, with far greater zest towards a backgammon board, made of whalebone — a diversion called by the name “tables,” from the circumstance, it is thought, of the players being obliged to bring back the pieces of their antagonists into their own table.

Near to Prince Charles stood a nobleman, whose shrewd and pleasing countenance was characterized by a mildness, and an air of indecision, uncommon in those days of fiery faction. For William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, had attached himself to the court party rather from a notion that it was due to his station to side with the Monarchy and the Church, than from a decided approval

of the principles and actions of the Royalists. Gentle and accomplished, fond of music, devoted to poetry, yet courageous and vigorous in the field, the earl had undertaken the office of preceptor to the royal boy, more from persuasion, than from inclination; and he lived—for the Parliament exempted him from death—to regret his trust; to see the child, over whom he had reluctantly watched, corrupted in foreign courts; to find him, in maturity, one who would sacrifice all that was faithful in friendship to the flatteries of profligate women—all that was valuable in existence, for the conversation of the most abandoned set of men that ever thronged a British Court.

“ You are check-mated, Wharton; and for the third time. ’Tis something to see the great astrologer so poor a hand at the chess-board.” But observing that the colour mounted into Wharton’s cheeks, the young Prince adroitly turned the discourse, and, pointing to a hunting-piece, which had been taken from one of the other apartments of the castle, and placed upon an

easel in the hall, he said,—“ There’s a wonder! next Monday se’nnight, my lord, we shall have my cousin Rupert’s newly-contrived print of that Schneiders, which my father so highly prizes.”

“ —And which,” interposed the Earl of Newcastle, “ your royal father discovered to be painted by two different hands. There is not,” pursued the nobleman, with an enthusiasm which had the rare quality of being sincere,—for he loved as well as admired his accomplished sovereign—“ there is not such a judge of painting in the realm as my Royal Master. ’Twas, I remember, at some gay anniversary, whether of my lord Marquis’s wedding day, or—but no matter, the value of that very painting was disputed. ‘ Is there,’ said his majesty, on that occasion, ‘ only *one* hand in this picture?’ None of us could tell,—‘ There are two hands,’ quoth his majesty, ‘ the hand that drew the heads, I know—Master Rubens—t’other,’ quoth he, ‘ I know not.’ ”

“ —And Prince Rupert,” said Sir

George Wharton, looking up for an instant, "hath shown somewhat of his majesty's ingenious mind,—for in such respects none doth surpass the King,—by this new fashion of the mezzo-tinto. By the Virgin! his royal highness hath done well in that matter, to catch the notion from seeing one of our men scrape the rust from a barrel,—'twas marvellous!"

"George Wharton can brag of every man's merits, save his own," whispered Lord Newcastle to Prince Charles, as he led him away to his private apartments, anxious to shield him from the contamination of society unsuited to his years. "The poor knight hath sold his paternal estate,"—the Earl sighed as he spoke, "to raise the first troop of horse that enlisted into the royal cause."

"But he will be remembered! the King will not forget to serve *him*!" exclaimed Charles with much, perhaps sincere, perhaps taught, vehemence. "He hath his majesty's favour, aye, and for ever!"

"And thine own, my Prince?" said Cavendish gently.

“ Aye, true,—thinkest thou, my lord, I can ever forget those who served my father?”

“ I know not,”—Lord Newcastle spoke gravely, almost severely, — “ this is a changing world, and thou art,”—‘ a Medici by descent,’—he *could* have uttered, but he simply added, “ a very youth.”

Meanwhile the game at chess was ended, the tables were closed, and Sir George Wharton began inditing sonnets to some absent eye-brow, on costly tablets;—practising, as an amusement, that art of poesy which became, in adverse times, the source of his livelihood;—and scribbling on a richly-decorated bauble, which he was afterwards fain to pawn for a little raiment: such were some of those many vicissitudes to which the devoted enthusiasts who sacrificed their all to retain their monarch at the head of the state, heroically submitted.

Lord Lindesay, better known until after the death of his father, at Edge-Hill, as Montague Bertie, hung over the curiously-wrought chair, in which

George Wharton lounged, looking, with the apathetic indolence of a man who has just been engaged in the most exciting and bustling scenes that life can offer, upon the vain vaporings, as he termed them, of Wharton's muse. The deep mourning of this gallant and exemplary nobleman revealed the tale so often told in those devastating days of civil war;—whilst the bandaged knee, the arm in a sling, proclaimed that he had of late been personally engaged in some stern conflict. And never were valour and loyalty set forth in a fairer form than in that of Lindesay—dark eyes, a regular and oval face, a mouth of great beauty and sweetness, becomingly surmounted with a small moustache, marking the outline of the curled lip;—long hair parting in front and hanging over his shoulders, announced the courtly Cavalier—but his was courtliness devoid of effeminacy,—and the tall and manly form lost nothing of its comeliness that it had grown robust in martial exercises;—the face, over which there was a shade of melancholy, was not the less

engaging that it was pale, though sun-burnt;—for those who gazed could not forget Edge-Hill. They could not fail to picture to themselves Lindesay, fighting his way to his father, agonized at the news that that heroic nobleman, after a brave defence, had been struck to the ground. The bloody scene, with all its horrible minutiae of anguish and suffering,—the aged father overpowered,—the son receiving his wounded body in his arms, and consenting to become a prisoner of war, that he might watch the ebbing tide of life, until the parent's heart had ceased to beat!—All this passage in life's stormy course was recalled to those who gazed upon Lord Lindesay;—and his wounds became ornaments; his brow, wrinkled prematurely by care, was fairer than when he had started on his career in all the perfection of his youth;—the tarnished, and battered insignia of the Garter, adorned with which his father had died, and worn, by permission of Charles, on high occasions, by Lindesay, was more precious than the new and

costly decorations wherewith the gratitude of the now dependent monarch, lavishly, and sometimes rashly, rewarded his partizans. By one article of foppery alone was Lindesay tricked out,—his sword—a Damascus blade, never drawn to strike a prostrate foe, but used to the last to guard his sovereign; and when that sovereign needed no earthly aid, employed, with James Stuart and others, to protect his remains to their last home,—his sword was decorated with a bright love-knot,—wherefore, none knew. Prince Rupert's coarse sallies were silenced on the subject, George Wharton's raillery was in vain; even Charles had tried the forbidden subject once,—was gently and respectfully entreated to spare his gallant subject from the theme,—and never spoke of it again.

Lord Lindesay looked presently with some faint degree of interest over the shoulder of George Wharton; but soon smilingly put his hand before the young officer's eyes and bade him cease. "No, George, no! thou shalt not palm those couplets upon the company at Ragland

as thine own; they are of poor Carew's inditing; and Lord Lindesay read,

"Ask me no more where Jove bestowes,
When June is past, the fading rose;
For in your beautie's orient deepe,
These flowers, as in your causes, sleepe.

Ask me no more whether doth stray,
The golden atomes of the day.
The—"

"O! I see—the next is something of thine own composition. O! George, what a versatile genius art thou! Astrology, mathematics, poesy, music, fighting!—Skilled in all these, thou wilt have to gain thy livelihood by them one day, George!"

"Good, my lord! forestall not the evil hour; my studies, nay, my calculations teach me that George Wharton shall not carry these ugly scars with him to the grave to no purpose!" replied the officer, pointing to a ghastly and scarcely healed wound on his forehead. "The stars inform me—"

"—That thou art a simpleton. Let us have done with the stars, and return to the ladies. Who is this fair one upon whom

thou art scribbling indifferent good verses?
As I foretell, George, *that* will be a
good trade for thee, when the king is
driven from the country, and our lands
are all confiscated and sold; but thou
must then sing thy ballads to a psalm tune."

"If you knew, my lord, the goddess of
my inspiration !

' In each man's heart that doth begin
To love, there's ever framed within
A little world ; for so I found
When first my passion reason drown'd.'

So I have but one world, and that is—
come along, to the south-eastern turret.
Such dark, beseeching, soul-stirring,
heart-moving eyes! such hair! to say
nought of the nose, mouth, and chin.
Do not you remember, my lord, before
the Earl of Pembroke proved himself a
recreant, and no peer,—how, at Wilton,
we noted a certain head of Venus—simply
a head—it riseth from a lotus leaf? and
there's such a pretty turn upon the coun-
tenance, the mouth is chiseled with so
fine a touch; and then her skin, like to her
name, Blanch,—"

“ O ! George—hold thy peace ! For thou mayst bide a time ere this new goddess of thine steps from her bower. Her kindred mourn, aye, and but too recently, the death of my poor father’s friend, Lord Arundel, who hath not long survived his early companion : these are wounds, George, not so haply healed as this ”—and he touched George Wharton’s forehead,—“ or this ”—and he pointed to his own bandaged knee. “ They are here ! ”—and the earl placed his hand on his heart, very solemnly. “ However, we have no time to be sad in these days. Nevertheless ! poor Henry Arundel ! he did not receive his father’s blessing.”

George Wharton looked embarrassed, and arose from his seat. Grief was always an awkwardness to him ; for he knew only the paraphernalia of sorrow, like mutes at a funeral. His verses were always full of smarts, darts, wounds, and death ; but his actual sorrows had as yet only been doled out to him in homœopathic quantities.

“ —Besides,” said Lord Lindesay, as he strolled out into the court, and pursued

his way, with his arm on George's shoulder, "this fair one is affianced to Edward Herbert;—and thou wouldst not, George, make her belie her vow?" the earl glanced humorously at Wharton, as he spoke. There was nothing in the Cavalier's appearance to indicate danger to a female heart. Nature, at the first onset had made him plain; time had not altered the intentions of Nature.

George Wharton was a lanky, black-haired, pale-complexioned man, who looked as if he were afraid of washing away his natural colour, by giving it too much ablution. He was an instance, that a man may be sentimental without being interesting; air and exercise, good habits, and rest at nights, might have improved the cadaverous hue, and lighted up the large heavy eyes which were dimmed every night with watching obstinate stars that told innocent untruths to the fanciful astrologer;—whilst the pale complexion of thought was sicklied over with unprofitable speculations upon nativities, which would, after all, take their own way.

But George was too great a philosopher to consult a looking-glass; if he had, the simplicity of his character, and the happy state of self-delusion in which some plain men pass all their existence, would have thrown tender tints over the hard features which a romantic imagination had set down, in Master Wharton's conception, as picturesque and chivalric-looking. And then to hear the worthy astrologer talk,—to observe that he never felt the slightest scruple, nor saw the slightest obstacle, on the score of person, in addressing a fair lady—but, let him speak, as vain men generally do, in his own behalf. And one could scarcely be harsh enough to call the poet-astrologer vain; it was his ignorance of the world, and his knowledge of the stars;—it was his early seclusion at Oxford, in the study of mathematics; his later dreamy hours at the top of turrets, or in the recesses of a library, that had obscured his perceptions, and left him rather an ignorant, and unsophisticated, than a presuming man.

“I know that a young damsel might

have a richer suitor," said George, turning round to the right, as he and Lindesay came upon the ramparts, and winking one eye, (an ungainly habit,) as he spoke—"but I have never found any difficulty in making a lady listen to my lays. When the leaguer was before Banbury, there was a certain yeoman's daughter, who—who—but I should blush to speak of these things—nevertheless—"

"Aye! a yeoman's daughter," said Lord Lindesay, "fain to match, I'll warrant, with one of such gentle blood—a Wharton of Kirkby Lonsdale."

"I know not that it was ambition," replied George Wharton, somewhat diffidently. "*She* sware not.—'Twas somewhat sad to see the girl," he went on to say, winking his other eye, "hovering, with seemly behaviour, too, about my troop on parade; but I would not wed a yeoman's daughter; nor, a prince's were she not comely—my lord. Now, Mistress Blanch—"

"—O! George, set not thy cap on high there; she *is* betrothed—and when the

tumults are somewhat abated, she is to be wedded to her cousin Edward Herbert, who hath a fair estate, and is a proper, comely youth ; but, may be, the subject of the lady's charms may be as fitly set to the song of thy muse, whether she be married or single—the love that hath never been may serve as well for verse as that which is :—nay, better : the idol of thy model, Surrey, is recorded to have scarce looked upon her worshiper. Poor Carew had his Celia, who was, by his own inditing, coy and scornful ; Master Edmund Waller hath his Saccharissa and—”

“ But, yonder comes Edward Herbert,” interrupted Wharton, in a melancholy tone—“ I know him by his limp.”

“ By my troth thou art well skilled in matters of gait and presence, then, — for there are not many of us that can walk straight. Presume not upon that, George ; a transient lameness sits not ill upon a man in his youth ; besides, it is graceful, it is *à-la-mode* — ’tis rather a reproach to walk over well, when scarce twenty of our bravest peers but have seen some

service ; — thyself — 'tis a pity that the gash came just across thy brow, George, yet I swear, 'tis more adornment than disfigurement. — So, Captain Herbert seems to reconnoitre the eastern turret too ; — good day, Sir Edward, that is to be, if fame speaks not untruly. The air is pleasant in this quarter, is it not ? — calm, yet *warm* ? ”

“ My lord,” answered the young officer, blushing, whilst he stood before a nobleman and a superior officer, with his cap in his hand, — “ I have been bred up in this castle, and sundry recollected pleasures ” —

“ Ay, — I understand perfectly,” said Lord Lindesay, smiling ; “ no apologies, Captain Herbert ; there is not the least occasion for any such. I comprehend — and my friend Captain Wharton will sing a duo any day with you, to the tune of — ; but I beg pardon,” added Lord Lindesay, checking himself, seeing the real embarrassment of the young lover. — “ Tarry you long at Ragland, Captain Herbert ? ”

“ Until we march into the west, as it is

rumoured we are to do," replied the young soldier, with alacrity; — for the high-spirited young man, just emerged from boyhood, was especially abashed at being the subject of ridicule for a passion of which he was now ashamed, which he could only very clumsily conceal, not really conquer; yet he held it paltry and dishonourable even to think of wedlock, when every thought should be engaged, every nerve strained, in the one great cause.

"You are well nigh recovered?" said Lord Lindesay, as he moved, with the dignity of a man high in the world's estimation, and exalted in command, by the side of the young officer, and the party, turning together, paced up and down the green terrace-walk, beneath the tower of Gwent — "your wounds are healed?"

"O! they were trifles!" replied Edward Herbert, forcing a laugh, although it was evident that his young frame had suffered a severe shock, that he walked in pain, and that to youth and nature alone might his friends look for the chance of an ultimate and entire recovery from dan-

gerous wounds, and consequent fever, at a period of life when the growth was scarcely completed, and when the constitution is, like the mind, more excitable and delicate than at a later stage of existence. "I hope, I do hope I shall soon have his majesty's permission to march under Prince Rupert."

"And wherefore with his highness?" asked Lord Lindesay, diving into the character of the handsome Herbert, rather from idleness and for pastime to harassed thoughts, than from any great or real interest in the subject under discourse.

"Because," replied Herbert, "he is always for fighting; he always pursues an enemy to the very extremity; his valour is precipitate — suited to the dangerous emergencies of these times, and our only chance of knocking down the power of the Roundheads."

"In my opinion," observed Lord Lindesay, seriously, "without, believe me, any of that idle calumny or unworthy jealousy which some men take delight in — to my mind the Prince — this in confidence,

young man — is far better suited to the sea-service than to land. Such dauntless, mad, rash valour as his highness shows, suits well fighting on ship-board ; but we want generalship here — not that I gain-say the Prince's merits. I hold him to be a compound of all that is great and honourable ; at once simple and sincere — ardent, yet strange to say, phlegmatic ; — brave as a lion, but patient under his reverses, — his modesty affords a singular proof of the little store a truly valiant man sets upon his exalted fame, of which your general, that is to be, seems unaware. Yet my mind misgives me, that he is not the general to bring success to a cause which requires as much delicate management in the consequences of success, as valour in attaining it. You were a volunteer in the King's troop, were you not ? ”

“ I was,” replied Captain Herbert, modestly, though a glow of pride and delight gave animation to his countenance ; — “ and well might it deserve the name of a royal troop. We reckoned in this troop

some two and thirty lords, — or who will, if they survive the war, come to be such. There were, my lord, five French noblemen amongst us ; — the whole troop was composed, privates and all, of the ancient gentry of the nation, and I think there was not among them a person of so mean a birth as myself.”

“ Nor did they behave unworthy of their rank on first showing their faces to the enemy,” said Lord Lindesay, courteously ; but, he added very gravely, “ there were some gallant officers of no lowly condition on the side of the parliament at that encounter. I know not how it is — it chills my blood to hear a fallen enemy ask for quarter in English.” He walked along as he spoke, and for some moments there was a silence, not even broken by Wharton ; whilst Edward Herbert, new in the career of arms, and ardent in the cause, hopeful of the event, gazed admiringly upon the soldier-like mien of Lord Lindesay — the model of all young officers ; and forgot to admire, in the military attributes of one of the bravest, as well as

the most amiable of Charles's adherents, the graces, and expressions which might have charmed a court.

But soon the loiterers on the terrace were summoned to the noon-day meal, served at different tables, according to the differing ranks of those who partook of the repast:—and chess, billiards, dice, and the tables to some; tennis, bowls, archery, and shooting with rifles to others, occupied the afternoon of the day—a portion of one of those fugitive intervals of repose and enjoyment, which Charles the First snatched from the campaign of 1642, and to which he was forced, on some occasions, to summon councils of his chief military commanders, as well as to hold privy councils of his state officers. Meantime, let us look—as the inhabitants of Ragland could not do—into distant scenes, and view events of which those who were the most deeply interested in their progress, were haply unconscious.

CHAPTER VII.

— Life has past
With me but roughly since I saw thee last.

COWPER'S *Lines to his Mother's Picture.*

It was on a fine autumnal day that a troop of that corps which afterwards became celebrated as Cromwell's Ironsides, was exercising in the castle court at Dorchester, now the court-yard of the county gaol. The famous "sloven," as Hampden called Cromwell, now rising, according to the prediction of that clear-sighted judge, "to be one of the first men in England," had endeavoured to form this regiment of cavalry, not of decayed serving-men and tapsters, but of materials more competent to match with those gentlemen of honour who composed the troopers of the king's army; choosing

also "men who had the fear of God before them, and who made some conscience of what they did." Yet still, with all these politic precautions, with all these sanctimonious expressions, the troop which afterwards attained a pitch of discipline which rendered them almost invincible, had a touch of the "tapster-and-decayed-serving-man" quality about it, nevertheless. The men were hard-featured, and stupid-looking; their apparel was ill made, having no better tailor, it may be presumed, than their commander was wont to employ; their accoutrements were imperfect, and in ill condition; their horses were thumping team-horses, fat and clumsy as those of the Belgian breed, but not clever and apt, like the steeds of our continental neighbours. Yet might not the Royalist look with rash contempt upon these far-famed, but ill-washed warriors; one soul, one object possessed them; they were compact and indivisible in spirit, like the bundle of sticks in the fable. God and conscience had prospered their cause, as they presumptuously averred,

and their general, Cromwell, had disabused their minds of weak and embarrassing prejudices; he had taken away the awkwardness of that profession under which the parliamentary troops had hitherto enlisted, of fighting by the King's authority against his person. He had declared "that if he chanced to meet his majesty in battle, he would as soon fire his pistol at him as at any other man."

Enlightened and enlivened by this new principle of action, the Ironsides, of whom this troop was a body of recruits, had the further advantage, in the west of England, of Sir Edward Hungerford's example and superintendence; he was not scrupulous; and his new-school notions had grown, as such notions generally do, considerably in strength and boldness, in the course of his career.

Two children, standing on the steps of the guard-room, were watching the manœuvres of the troop. They were boys of delicate make, and still more delicate features; but whose quaint and yet homely attire and quiet demeanour gave them an

old-fashioned and precise, rather than vulgar air. For even the change of habits which the poor little prisoners had undergone, even the want of cleanliness, even depression and fear, had not, nor could not, obliterate the traces of gentle birth and of early influences. Yet the Lady Cecily—happily she was far away—would she have known her Everard? Would she have known her little Claude? Their costly attire all exchanged for plain cloth garments, inconveniently, and ill-fittingly made, relieved, or intended to be relieved, by little bands of once white linen around the throat, but the grim colour of which betrayed the story of every-day neglect. Would she have known her boys?—the one unsubdued in spirit, but old enough to cherish his early sorrows, pining away his young days in fruitless yearnings for that maternal embrace, for those hours of joy, which he shall not taste until—but let me not anticipate the events of my narrative.

The younger boy, Claude, had met the blasts of misfortune, if not more sturdily,

less resistingly, and they had not nipped him in the bud, as they had poor Everard. He stood, and looked with some interest, at the moving phalanx, laughed, once or twice, at certain mal-adroit exercises ; and, though pale and thin, and close cropped, and shabby, he did not appear unhealthy. But Everard, after some moments' gazing, a transient curiosity lighting up his face, slunk back into the guard-room, and seated himself—his usual post—on a low settle in the deep enclosure in the chimney, cowering over the flames.

No ! his mother would *not* have known him ! for the face, not only pale and squalid, was pinched and wizened ;—the tender little bird ! nourished with such warmth and care, how could it bear the rude imprisonment, the coarse and meagre fare of that guard-room at Dorchester ? The limbs were shrunk, and so weak, that the fairy feet which once bounded far and near over the greenswards at Wardour, could now scarcely creep along the court, just by yon wall, where sometimes the oppressed and per-

secuted child was wont to steal, basking in the sun, to catch, perchance, a ray of hope, as well as of warmth, from the genial beams which shine alike upon the just and the unjust.

But his favourite spot, whence he was often wantonly disturbed and driven, was in that ingle-nook; and there warmth and, what he loved as well, seclusion, gave a brief solace to that growing languor, to that sinking of the spirits which children—they scarce know why—suffer when harshness or neglect, or even change from the accustomed softness and delicacies of life, shake the insecure stamina of their young frames; and, sometimes, that shake is mortal.

Everard started from his stooping posture. "Go to; there, get along, churl; fetch my cartridge-box from the store-room," said a gruff voice, whilst there looked in a stern, regimental sort of face from the court-yard, and the visage of dreaded Sergeant Rowe scared the poor child from his hiding-place; one look from those glaring eyes, one command

from that voice was sufficient: he went; yet the blood mounted up into the child's wan cheek, and his eye sparkled for an instant; the spirit of the Arundels, in-born, was not all crushed in that young bosom: the valour of the Somersets—yet, poor boy! what had he now to do with these? 'twere mockery to recall them.

Feeble and slow Everard recrossed the court-yard, when, as he gave the cartridge-box into the hands of Sergeant Rowe, a murmur broke from his pale lips—Rebellion! what a sin in the sergeant's eyes! He snatched the cartridge-box violently from the child's hands.

“Insolent! insolent art thou! Master Cavalier,” he exclaimed, looking for a few instants at the child's swelling chest and quivering lips. “Friend Nettlebeck,” he turned to a man in plain clothes, with his hands in his pockets as he spoke, “how wouldst thou serve this imp of Satan?”

“Put him to some good trade,” muttered Master Nettlebeck, who was a scri-

ener in the ancient town of Dorchester, but who was admitted to the privilege of seeing the troops exercise, "make him an honest tanner; or, if thou wilt exalt the godly so far, 'prentice him to a clothier; there'll be none of yon vermin soon in the land," added Mr. Nettlebeck, talking dictatorially, for he was a man of influence in the town. "Lords, indeed! better do something with these churls; they'll not be ransomed; they are sure not to be exchanged. Sir Edward hath set his countenance against any ransom. Let them be brought up in the fear of the Lord, in the pleasant ways of the righteous. This churl, now," he clapped little Claude somewhat roughly on the back, "will make a strapping soldier, anon; but that," he looked round at Everard, surveyed his drooping frame with unfeigned contempt, "that chap will never earn meal for his porridge."

"Stand up, man," cried Sergeant Rowe, as he loaded his piece, without looking at the boy, "and show thyself. Come, better cheer up, my heart, for thou'lt never —

curse on this ramrod—thou 'lt not be ransomed for *any* price."

The Sergeant went on with his military duties, and thought no more of the young prisoner. Master Nettlebeck strutted away to a town-council, where he was engaged to harangue; and the poor child, unseen and forgotten, crept into the chimney-corner.

Some days after this little scene an officer arrived in the Castle court at Dorchester. It was late in the afternoon, and Claude Arundel, who was playing with some boys of low degree in the court, was attracted by the seemly, though not costly, attire, and the lofty bearing of the stranger. The children of the higher classes have an instinctive perception of those attributes to which they have been accustomed. Claude stood still; and, as the stranger stopped, looked upon the group, and examined each severally, with a mild, though searching, glance, a reminiscence of something long since passed away, brought colour into the fair boy's cheeks: suddenly, the officer, who was

turning away, stopped short; his face reflected almost the bright tints of little Claude's, but a passionate and bitter exclamation showed the feelings of the *man*.

"Is it—can it be possible?" exclaimed he; "so neglected, so misused! Tell me that child's name!" he exclaimed, turning impetuously towards Sergeant Rowe, who stood subserviently behind him.

"He is a prisoner, and of a Cavalier family," said the sergeant; "and—"

"And you have thus abused the charge reposed in you by Captain Ludlow?" cried the officer sternly.

"I have obeyed orders, sir," said the sergeant; "no favour was to be shown; the boys were to be godly instructed, well guarded; they have been duly exercised in all pious observances, and —"

"—Hold your peace, sir," said the officer, vehemently. "Deliver up the child to me: he is a prisoner no longer. Where is his brother? Where, my poor child, is thy brother? What! dost thou shrink from me, poor boy? I shall not hurt

thee; I shall restore you to your home; thou wilt be safe with me."

"I shall be safe here," said Claude, releasing himself from the hands of the officer, "and I cannot go away without Everard."

"True; but *with* Everard?—to your parents? to the Lady Cecily. God in heaven! she will not know her child! Order your people to bring the suits belonging to these gentlemen," added the officer, imperatively, to the sergeant; "let them have their wonted attire, and not these garments of sack-cloth, suited only to the baser people. Begone, sir! why do you stop, and stare, and dare to hesitate?"

"Good sir—your honour—their unseemly garments have been sold for the good of the great cause," whispered the man: "I had their flaunting love-locks shorn, for it was a snare to my babes, to—"

"Enough! thou hast plundered these poor children, and shalt answer for it: no matter; go!" and the officer threw some gold pieces from an embroidered purse as

he spoke ; “ go, and see that the goodliest clothes that can be purchased be brought, and on the instant, for—for the sons of Lord Arundel. And now, Claude, lead me—lead me, my poor child, to thy brother.”

“ He is not well,” said the child, encouraged by the kind voice and courteous accents of the stranger ; “ he’s only perverse, dame Karan saith ; he will not eat ; he *never* plays, save sometimes with the rapier that he brought here from —”

The child paused, and his soft accents died away. He avoided, for some reasons of fear, or prudence, mentioning the word “ home.”

The officer crossed the guard-room. “ He is not there,” said Claude, pointing to the rude and dirty settle near the fire, “ he’s often there, but not now. He’s a bed—here’s dame Karan ;” and, as he spoke, an elderly woman, meet partner for Sergeant Rowe, came from an inner apartment.

She led the officer through many passages, until at the last she stopped, open-

ed a closet door—on a small bed lay a child, sleeping.

The officer stood still for a few moments—so still, that Karan was little prepared for the gust of passion, the vehement reproaches which followed that silence. Particulars of the child's illness were sternly demanded—soon given—the child took to his bed the very day that he heard Sergeant Rowe and Master Nettlebeck declare that there would be no ransom. Hope, secretly cherished, and bearing up the boy under daily privations, was suddenly extinguished; with the confiding heart of childhood he doubted not the truth of what he heard—the wanton blow was given—the home ceaselessly remembered, the affection yearned for, the liberty which he pined to taste—for the boy was prematurely gifted with a thoughtful and sagacious mind—were to be closed to him for ever. The tender twig was crushed—the bond between him and existence was loosened. Months of quiet, pining grief, varied 'tis true, by frequent forgetfulness, and broken by some scattered childish

pleasures — had been borne unmurmuringly, but had prepared the way for an insidious disease, which bad air, ill-prepared and coarse food, confinement, and tyranny, and sadness, had greatly fostered.

Karan, intimidated and, indeed, threatened, withdrew; and the officer was left alone with the child. What visions did that still beautiful, though wasted face, recall!—Lady Cecily! delicate and sorrowful; Lady Arundel—Blanch!—and a groan almost of anguish burst from Sidney Godolphin,—for it was his lot to witness the sufferings of the young prisoner—when he reflected, “They will accuse me of having betrayed their confidence.” As he gazed the child awoke.

He looked wild and scared, and hid his face under the bed-clothes when he saw Godolphin; for misgivings of treachery, dread of his fellow mortals had taken possession of the once guileless breast of unconscious childhood; and he held up his hands in supplication, and upraised his eyes to the stranger, and muttered—“Pardon me—I have done no wrong—I

have been good, only I cannot get up—I cannot walk.” Godolphin sat down by the bed-side, and raised him in his arms, wiped the starting tears from his pale face, and spoke to him in that tone which children never mistake—those accents which they cannot misunderstand—told him that he was come to befriend him; perhaps, to take him home. Godolphin hinted at this cautiously, for he dreaded the effects of sudden joy upon the frail form of the child; he shuddered lest the slender chords of existence should be broken ere he was restored to the arms of the father, to the tender care of the mother, who had never ceased to mourn his absence.

“To go home? home? to Wardour?”

“No, to Ragland!”

“Yes, I am ready, *quite*. I can go. I can walk, I know. Make haste, make haste; or Sergeant Rowe will come back and hinder us.” Such were the exclamations of the boy, when he began clearly to perceive that the hour long looked for, but of late given up in despair, had, at length, arrived.

It was affecting to see Everard tottering, attempt to cross the chamber; to witness his feeble haste, to hear his accents of feverish impatience.

“And Claude shall go with us? They do not ransom *me* only? I must not leave him—”

“—No, my child, you are both free, quite.” The officer’s voice faltered as he spoke.

“Are you quite sure? Is it not a dream?” asked Everard timorously and anxiously; whilst Godolphin awkwardly, but assiduously helped him to dress, and smoothed down the shorn locks, struck every now and then by a trace of those expressions, a turn of those features, that were indelibly impressed on the memory of a true, though hopeless, affection. “She offered herself to save them!” he muttered to himself, as the sick child, at last fatigued with his hurried preparations, and the energy of his aroused spirits dying away, laid himself down upon the bed, and wept from very weakness.

Then Godolphin raised him in his arms,

and with the tenderness of a brave good man, carried the emancipated little captive to the room below. There stood Claude, abashed at the sight of a stranger, afraid of any change; he clung to his brother, as Godolphin placed Everard on a seat, whilst he sought his servants. When he returned, the young child was found closely embraced by the elder one; both were weeping clamorously; it was hard to them to believe that good tidings had come to *them*. Everard sobbed from weakness, and from a revulsion of feeling which was not joy; poor child! such a cordial could scarcely again visit him in this world! Claude wept because he could not remember Mr. Godolphin; he was frightened at strange faces, and the passiveness of his nature had become accustomed to the harshness of Sergeant Rowe, and the petty tyranny of dame Karan.

But children—how soon they are consoled! What trifles assuage their vociferous despair! sudden grief is succeeded by sudden joy—their nature is one of

impulse; it is only the repetition of habitual unkindness that sinks their spirits, and wears them away—yes, even them! the young, bright beings,—into darksome despair. And Godolphin, to whom such gentle cares were new, acquired, from the benignity of his nature, insight into the feelings of these desolate ones; he wiped away their tears, and poured balm into the wounds of their young hearts; he spoke to them of Wardour—of Lady Cecily—of home—of Lady Arundel. The face of the young officer was flushed, as he reminded them of her who had offered to be their ransom, and to share the gloom of the prison in their stead. Claude had not noted, nor understood the scene; but Everard's more ripened capacity had comprehended it well. In such discourse did Godolphin wear away the hours, as he carried the young prisoners under a convoy, and with a safe-conduct, procured by the most strenuous exertions, and even by the payment of money — that night from Dorchester; and leaving the Mambury,—that boasted

amphitheatre of the Romans, — to the south, they took their way towards Bristol.

Meantime, that home to which the young prisoners were carried was the scene of unwonted revelry; the rallying-point of the loyal-hearted; and the resort of those who, many of them, for the last time, attended upon their fated monarch, as courtiers, whilst as yet the outward attributes of majesty were not wrested from the unfortunate Charles.

The feast of Saint Michael and all Angels, was commemorated in the castle of Ragland, and was celebrated with due observances by the pious Catholics who formed the majority of the castle's inmates. During the previous evening, many devout votaries had pressed with their knees the stone steps of the chapel, invoking with uplifted eyes the aid of those tutelar, or guardian, angels, who, as their faith inculcated, attended their entrance into this earthly pilgrimage, and hovered, with benignant purpose, around the traveller, until the heavenly guardian

had guided him in safety to the realms of everlasting happiness.

And beautiful is the speculation! and—in those darker ages, before the Scriptures were commonly read and studied by enlightened minds, and ere we learned to feel that we want no gentler help than that of the Saviour, no more continual care than that of Him who careth for the sparrow—how cheering must have been the conviction, that each erring and benighted soul has its own peculiar angel “appearynge,” as an old writer observes, “in sundrye shapes,” admonishing, comforting, appearing in visions to warn the unwary, or performing their offices by some internal conviction!

The pious Charles proffered his devotions in his own oratory, where his chaplain read that admirable collect for the appointed feast-day, in which the English church, waiving with Christian wisdom the obscure and disputed point, offers a prayer to God that, since His “holy angels always do Him service in heaven, so, by His appointment, here they might suc-

cour and defend us on earth." And, perhaps, none in his disturbed and blighted capital—none, in those once fair regions which he swayed, devastated now by fire and sword, needed more that prayer than he whose hours were numbered, and whose course was henceforth to be like "the doublings of the hunted hare."

The hall was filled with an assembled tenantry; it was still the custom for landlords to invite their dependants on the Feast of Saint Michael to partake of the goose, then a delicacy, and kept chiefly for the dainty fare of the higher classes. And the roof rang with old Gwyllim's symphonies, and with the clang of rude music from the gallery; and many a beaker was quaffed, and many a manchet broken, and the revelers who met at one dispersed not until five o'clock, when they went into the court, or stood without the ramparts, to view the fire-works which were to be let off that evening.

The King dined in the banqueting-room; the Prince Charles sitting at table with him; whilst the recently-created

Marquis of Worcester waited on his royal guest; and nobles were proud to be honoured by an attendance upon him who afterwards was forced to turn with disgust from the inexperienced and rude soldiery, who performed the duties of the table to their sovereign.

Early in the afternoon, however, the temperate King went with the Earl of Newcastle, with Lord Lindesay, and with several others of those who composed his Court, to play at bowls until even-song—for Protestants as well as Catholics, kept all due observance of the Vesper hour; the forms of the old church had scarcely fallen into disuse—it was its spirit that had been purified and amended—many of its customs were still maintained.

His attendance being over, the Marquis of Worcester went to loiter on a terrace which overlooked the gardens, followed by one who, like a domestic spaniel, crept after the footsteps of her honoured grandsire—Blanch Somerset.

It was a pleasant sight—that fine old

man, walking with a firm step beyond the embattled walls, still in all the vigour of life; and, with head erect, and majestic gait, sallying forth from amid a fond family, and respectful attendants; and in the graceful and gorgeous full dress suited to his age and rank, Henry Somerset displayed, indeed, the attributes of that princely aristocracy which was then in its zenith of character, both intellectual and moral. His muscular and powerful hand resting on the fair, uncovered shoulder of his grand-child, whom he loved with that softer, and less anxious, affection which Providence causes to grow up within the breast of age, (gracious and lovely as the second bloom of autumnal flowers,) and directing it to the young creatures who revive the pleasures of the parent with fewer of his cares. And there was this in the noble nature of the marquis, that he loved poor Blanch the better that she was an orphan; and that, of all the lofty race to which the fair girl claimed kindred, she was the only one who had a blot upon the honour of her

parents to offend the scrupulous, or to sadden the heart of the sensitive. Moreover, there was somewhat of her grand-sire's character in the young orphan; his fearlessness — his generosity — his native love of merriment — his enthusiasm — his truth; in the confiding nature of his disposition, which could with difficulty mistrust another; but "lent out his good-will," as Wilberforce terms it, "upon lease to all mankind," to be withdrawn when the terms upon which it was, by implication, given, were violated by treachery, or demerit of any base description.

"Come along, poppet! — nay, thou laggest!" was the peer's exclamation, as he crossed the draw-bridge, and, stepping out beyond the castle wall, mounted a fair terrace, which sloped to a garden, wherein obelisks, spheres, and animals of stone, were placed to diversify a flat, verdant space, which was furthermore varied by alleys, and intersected by walks formed with sand instead of gravel.

"'Tis fitting I shall pace along after my

lord *marquis*," replied Blanch, with a short laugh, and a marked emphasis upon the word; "to say nought of my duty and reverence to my noble grandsire. But bless me! I had not noted my lord's hat," exclaimed Blanch, clasping her hands together, and gazing upwards at a black slouched hat, surmounted with three white feathers, and encircled with a marquis's coronet with the usual seven balls, beneath which a band of jewels of the richest quality sparkled. "Bless me! I must needs kiss the most noble marquis's hand!" cried Blanch. "Is it even so?—and has his gracious majesty?"—The girl knelt down, and kissed her grandfather's hand as she spoke. "For many, many years, my lord! may you grace an honour that can add nought of reverence to your head;" she began but her grandfather checked her with an arch and shrewd glance.

"Nought of reverence! cease your folly! mignonne! What! art thou turned Round-head, Blanch, that thou holdest his majesty's favour so cheap?—What, and thou blushest! nay my girl shakes with fear!

Thou art not afraid of thy old grandsire, girl — come, come." And he raised his trembling grandchild from the ground, and, laying his arm again on her shoulder, continued his walk.

An arbour at either end of the terrace, formed of flowering shrubs, and of thick and close-cut yews, tempted in vain the marquis and his companion to loiter there; neither did fragrant herbs interposed, in those unhorticultural days, with flowers in the pleasaunces, nor loaded fruit-trees, likewise indiscriminately mixed with shrubs; nor a curiously-fabricated aviary, wherein canaries, English, French, Spanish, and even African birds strained their little throats, detain the footsteps of the marquis and of Blanch; nor the yet more tempting fountain, farther on, in the midst of which rose a column, composed of two giants, back to back, one turned to the east, the other to the west, each holding a bowl, from which poured streams of clear water into a fish-pond beneath, stocked with perch, carp, tench, bream, — and playing around Neptune, Thetis, Doris, and other stone

deities, of aquatic associations. No—the cold waters, the fragrance of the flowers, the gay tints of the light shrubs, the harbingers of forth-coming change, which sooner display bright hues than the forest-trees—even the bowers set, as we are told, in orderly distance and fashion allured not the marquis and his companion to delay, or rest; neither did they tarry to smile at the misadventure of some groups of high-born and gaily-bedizened ladies who were overtaken by showers from the fountains, which, by a touch, and such secrets as awkwardness and sport alike allowed to escape, threw up a play of waters into the sunbeams, brightening every object around as they fell. At the extremity of a terrace an arched walk, formed of yew-trees, led into a green enclosure, hemmed round by a fantastic border of yew, cut into many forms; yet into none—such are the vain attempts of man to improve on Nature's plans—half so graceful or so umbrageous at that of the tree in its spontaneous growth. Below, on a square of fine green turf, a courtly

party, dressed in holiday suits, with ladies from the castle looking on, were playing at the now unfashionable game of bowls.

The king was the most assiduous in the pastime—so favourite a recreation of Charles, that he ever esteemed it a privilege, if, when, led about captive from place to place, any one selected spot had a fair bowling-green. This and chess, sedate amusements, were his accustomed diversions, and he lent to chess all the attention of a patient, thoughtful mind; so much so, that, it is said, when the news was imparted to him, that the Scottish commissioners had given him up to the parliament, he finished his game with an unmoved countenance, before making any comment upon that signal act of infamy.

But the game was just at a close; the king was preparing to leave the bowling-green; the antagonist parties were breaking up into groups; and Charles, accompanied by the Duke of Richmond, and bowing graciously to all present, moved

somewhat quickly, in fear of being too late for even-song, towards the terrace.

The marquis, taking Blanch with him, followed his majesty, noting not the trembling form and blanched cheek of the young lady, nor remarking the deep obeisance made in passing her, by a young Cavalier, who, walking in a group with several others, stood with his hat in his hand whilst his majesty moved onwards, nor resumed it until the marquis, with Blanch, had also nearly passed.

"By my troth! Edward Herbert!" exclaimed the marquis, catching a glimpse of the young man as he turned away. "Blanch!—Well, well!—not here—not here; anon for that matter; lovers' meetings are best in private. What sayst thou, my child? now, or presently?"

"Oh, my lord! not now! not now!" replied the young lady, trembling; "nor ever!" she added, in a low tone.

The chapel bells still rang as the marquis proceeded along the terrace, and Protestants and Papists alike turned to take another stroll, until a quicker peal

should summon them to even-song, as the Protestants called their devotions — to vespers, the Roman Catholics. It was a remarkable feature in the marquis's household, and the characteristic prevailed also among his guests, that, whilst both dependants and visitors were composed heterogeneously of Papists and of members of the Reformed church, no variance on the subject of religion ever disturbed the well-ordered family; disputes were prohibited; insults to another's faith were, therefore, unknown, and a sight, unparalleled in any other household—a sight which might seem a foretaste of that blessed communion in Heaven, which will assuredly not respect the doubts and differences, the errors and the scruples, of conscientious Christians, but which will be composed of those whose intentions were pure on earth — whose faith — call it by what name you will—had the spirit of our Redeemer's holy instructions.

Gay groups were those that clustered upon the terrace, broad enough as it was for two carriages to have met and passed :

and in no other part of England, beset with dire calamity as it was, could such an assemblage be seen—nor was it ever again seen whilst the towers of Ragland rose proudly in the calm sky, and the air was filled with the sounds of laughter, and the accents of cheerful voices. Here strolled a trio of high-born ladies, whose black hoods, drawn over their long ringlets, disclosed fair young faces, upon which the traces of care were not then marked, eyes which had not as yet shed those bitter tears which public events, no less than private sorrows, afterwards caused to flow; rosy lips which had never uttered a sorrowful expression; fair hands which afterwards were fain, in foreign climates, to sew, or work at embroidery, to support an exiled parent, or to furnish funds to an absent and imprisoned brother. There walked young gallants who had as yet seen little service: full of hope, buoyant in their ignorance of evils and dangers, insolent in their expressions towards their low-born foes, and scarcely deigning, in the magnanimity of their bliss, to cast a glance at the fair ladies,

who, relatives of the family, had gathered from provincial manor-houses, and dull Welsh castles, dimly seen among the blue mountains, to admire for the first—to many, perhaps to most, for the last—time, their monarch and his court. Further on came a graver party, Lord Lindesay and George Wharton, scarred with wounds; the one, no longer in the full flush of youth, looking with discriminating glances upon the various characters who came within the scope of his observation; the other, with head upraised, and abstracted air, “commercing,” as it seemed, “with the skies;” for no earthly object appeared to engage the romantic astrologer-poet-cavalier’s attention.

The prayer-bell ceased, and, in an instant, poet, maiden, warrior, courtier, marquis, and monarch, hastened down the green-sward; Charles proceeding, with the officers of his household, to his private oratory, and the marquis entering, with scarcely less state, the aisles of the lofty chapel, through which already rang the pealing anthem. There Father Pazani, in his sacerdotal robes, with pale,

thoughtful face, and voice musically modulated, assisted in chaunting the evening service ; whilst, in the oratory, the royal chaplain, in his surplice, devoutly read that simple and unexceptionable evening service of our church, which even the scrupulous and dissenting Priestley loved to attend, and which he declared to be adapted to all sects of Christians. There, in his prayers, stedfast as when, similarly engaged, the death of Buckingham being announced to him, he rose not, nor changed countenance, nor uttered a collect the less, until the service was ended, knelt the serious and pious Charles—martyr I will not call him (I like not the name). Before him, upon a superb cushion, lay the favourite and celebrated Bible of Queen Elizabeth, covered with tissue, and garnished on the inside with the crucifix, and the Queen's badges, and silver-gilt on the outside : whilst from the monarch's side hung a book of private devotions, suspended by a chain of gold. Candles, on the simple altar-piece in the oratory, threw over the quiet scene their glimmering light.

CHAPTER VIII.

If Music and sweet Poetry agree,
As they must needs—the sister and the brother ;
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.

Passionate Pilgrim.—SHAKESPEARE.

It was in tremor and dismay that Blanch Somerset found herself, in the confusion which ensued on entering the chapel, close by her betrothed, the now unwelcome suitor, the almost dreaded, Edward Herbert. Already had scruples the most painful, as to her secret sentiments towards him—her passionate attachment to another, possessed the young girl's mind. She loved a heretic. It was useless to conceal it from herself—he, whose gentle yet noble qualities had first dawned upon her with the greater effect from her state of inexperience, was not

forgotten ; for him, and for his conversion heart-felt sighs had escaped, and heart-wrung prayers had been uttered before the shrine beneath which Blanch now knelt,—and with whom ?

It was in vain—it was all in vain, that the incense was swung around her, and that the holy anthem was chaunted by the full voices of the choir—that the deep voice of Puzani was the signal for all holy Catholics to raise their hearts to God—she could not pray—she, an outcast, a recreant from all those principles which had been engrafted in her heart from childhood ! To-morrow, the appointed day of confession would come, and how should she dare to reveal, even in the confessional, the thoughts that burned within her ? It was a relief when the vespers were ended, and Blanch found herself in a long passage which communicated between the chapel and the private apartments of the castle. Some one followed her ; she knew who it was—she guessed ; the step, familiar in childhood, the very rustling of the

dress, could not be mistaken. She fled, as she had often fled, for sport, in childhood, and came suddenly into an apartment full of an awful assemblage of relatives. Lady Arundel, it is true, was not there; but, there was her uncle, Lord Glamorgan; there was Colonel, now Lord, Arundel; Lady Cecily; and, soon afterwards, Pauzani. And Blanch trembled before the grave personages collected; yet, there was one whom she feared not, and to whose side she clung, almost unconsciously, for support and comfort—her uncle, the marquis; and she found herself ere long encircled in his arms, and, leaning her head upon his shoulder, the affrighted spirits of the self-accused delinquent were soothed, and her courage was revived. She was aroused by the voice of Lord Arundel—

“Come hither, my dear cousin,” said the kind, but decisive, voice, whose tones Blanch heard with a start. “My dear lord, you will humour our pretty Blanch until she will scarcely know her own mind; Edward, salute your cousin!”

“What! and are young gallants so loth in these days?” exclaimed Lord Glamorgan, seeing the young captain of a dragoon regiment draw back, as if to sound a retreat, whilst Blanch turned hastily away.

“List! hear ye not the clock strike?” interposed Lady Cecily, hastily. “’Tis to summon my cousin Blanch and me to the gallery; and we are late. Blanch, we must hasten our ’tiring women, or—”

“—Or the masque will be commencing. Hie ye hence!” exclaimed Lord Arundel hurriedly; “and you, Edward—”

“Brook your rebuff as you may,” interrupted Lord Glamorgan, gliding past the young Cavalier, but looking intently in his face as he passed him.

“Oh!” said the young officer, as he found himself alone with Lord Arundel, when the rest of the party, drawn away by the clamour of the bell, had disappeared—“it is an indifferent matter to me. I wot not what Mistress Blanch means, in her disdain. I can solace myself with more manly pursuits than the

worship of her proud, disdainful charms, when once my wound is well, and I can walk again. Know you, my lord," added the youth, his colour rising, and biting his lip with vexation as he spoke, "what performances are to entertain the grown-up children of the Court to-night? Methinks I had best retire to rest, to consult my new oracle, this precious treatise on the art of gunnery, with the new mode of fortification, by Vauban; 'twill pass away the hours."

"Whilst others disport themselves?" asked Lord Arundel, smiling at the assumed contempt and real vexation of the young soldier, intoxicated by the glory of his first campaign. "You are quite a stoic, Master Edward. Forswear you marriage in your heroism? Say the word, and we will apprise Mistress Blanch of your reluctance to the bond she holds you in."

"Oh! as to that, my lord, there is time enough. Besides, I would not do such dishonour to the lady, as to seem to relax in my vows. Let her consult her own

pleasure, and I—but hear you not that the bell sounds again, my lord?”

“You are going to your chamber, I think you said?”

“Why, no; it may be unseemly. I would not be wanting in respect to his Majesty’s company of players.”

“You are right; do not be sneered into diffidence by a saucy girl. Besides, the play is one especially suited to your condition—‘Passions Calmed, or, the —’”

“Excuse me, it applieth not, my lord. I am not in the least disturbed by Mistress Blanch’s contumely—not in the least—not a whit—not a jot. It pleaseth me fully as well that, for the next five years, perhaps, I may roam free to serve my King, or to follow Prince Rupert, (under whose service I wish ever to be, for then we shall have enough of fighting,) rather than to be tied to household scenes, or fastened by a chain of obligation to my country manor, and forced to dangle after my wife’s spaniels, or to carry her hawks, or to—”

“Doubtless, doubtless!” exclaimed Lord Arundel, smiling; “you are right, Ed-

ward, to cast off such an unmanly subjection to a maiden who manifestly considers you not, nor affects you in the least."

"She is infinitely welcome! I can abide her contempt; but it was not always so. She affected me once, and I have not demeaned myself in her eyes since; I went as a volunteer in the service which she vowed to me she preferred before all others—that of his highness Prince Maurice; I have not soiled my rapier for nothing under the Prince; and I have obtained a troop under his highness Prince Rupert. She taunted me that I would not."

"Women are enigmas," observed Lord Arundel, with the calmness of a happy domestic man, who looks upon the troubles of the lover's tempestuous course with a pity nearly allied to contempt.

Thus they conversed. Lord Arundel and Edward, passing down various corridors, and crossing the quadrangle of the Fountain court, proceeded to the entrance of the great hall, the doors of which were open, and a sight, singularly brilliant, and

splendid beyond imagination, was presented to their view.

The hall was illuminated with small but numerous chandeliers, suspended from the ceiling, and with flambeaux stuck against the walls. At the extremity, opposite to the dais, and beneath the music-gallery, was a raised stage, upon which was erected a large screen, divided in the centre, and having depicted on it every conceivable object of landscape—houses, churches, palaces, rocks, meadows, fields, and gardens, with a delicate blue sky above; whilst, in the distance, the sea was pictured in billowy action. This,—one of the earliest attempts at scenic decoration, and borrowed from the devices of the Oxford scholars, when Charles the First and Henrietta had visited their university,—was set off by an emblem, or programme, of the whole play, mounted aloft, upon a label which proceeded out of the mouth of a cherub. Such were the earliest displays of that art which has arrived, in our days, at such an unparalleled perfection; for, previous to this

era, the only compliment which was paid to poor Tragedy was to hang the walls with black whenever the muse "with gorgeous pall came sweeping by." Still humbler was the reception prepared for Comedy, who gave forth her conceits upon a floor strewn with rushes; whilst all the accompaniments of the theatre, dress, weapons, ornaments, were in a state of disorder and meanness of which the lowest strolling company would, at this period, be ashamed. "Now you shall see," says Sir Philip Sidney, in his defence of Poesy, "three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By-and-by we have news of a ship-wracke in the same place;—then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the backe of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke, then the miserable beholders are bounde to take it for a cave. While, in the mean time, two armies fly in, represented with four swords and two bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?"

When Lord Arundel entered, an outbreak of trumpets, cornets, and hautboys was in the full swell of its boisterous performance ; whilst, at the end of the hall, and down its sides, expressions of satisfaction, nay, of delight, ascended, in one loud murmur, even into the vaulted roof of the vast and magnificent apartment.

Upon a throne, under a sumptuous cloth of estate, sat the King, attended by his great officers of state, and surrounded, at a respectful distance, by those who loved and honoured him even unto death. A calm and pleased, even a happy expression enlivened the face of the monarch, who was seen most to advantage in the social hour. His well-worn suit of steel armour, which for weeks he had been constrained to bear, was now exchanged for a sober-coloured dress of velvet, set off by a deep collar of rich lace, and adorned still more by a splendid star of jewels on one sleeve. Around his neck the King displayed the collar and the George ; on his hands he wore a profusion of rings, amongst which, the famous dial ring, which

gave to James the Second, and which required a book to explain it, was frequently commented upon to certain admiring courtiers by the King. A rich pearl in either ear, catching the attention amid the long locks which hung about his neck, completed a costume not gay, yet fanciful, and imparted the notion of that attention to trifles, that foreign love of finery, or bravery, as it was then called, which was a source of frequent ridicule to the Puritans—equally precise in matters of dress, but running into an extreme of plainness, which, if it be a merit, is assuredly not a merit of high degree.

“What a motley assemblage!” whispered Lord Arundel to his young friend, as they stood, every seat being occupied; for at the King’s command, the company (at,) until the courtesy of Lord Glamorgan procured them places. Along the walls, motionless, in their leathern doublets, the officers of the King’s body guard were ranged; richly-brocaded skirts, and slashed sleeves, relieving the tight sameness of their half-military attire. They were fine,

picked men ; all persons of condition, some of rank ; and, in this interval of ease, they cast kind glances at the country beauties of Monmouthshire, the daughters of Catholic and Royalist families who bloomed on some of the lower seats of the daïs. Behind them was a bevy of country squires, would-be Cavaliers, whose untameable hair, wild as their mountain-goats, was trained, but in vain, to fall in careless love-locks, " one shelving down" on the left shoulder, after the approved fashion of the day. They were full of fire and loyalty, these good Welshmen, and thirsting, doubtless, for distinction ; but their outlandish language, their inaptitude at learning any other, their obstinacy and pride rendered them no very effective agents in a country which nature had formed, as they confidently thought, for the chief purpose of driving besiegers to despair, and of rendering their mansions and castles impregnable.

The courtly gentlemen, and lords, who were seated above the Welsh squires, were mightily set off by the proximity.

For the Lloyds, Pryces, Powells, Howells, Joneses, Jenkinses, Evanses, diminished into little stars before the Dormers, Lindsays, Seymours, and Stuarts, who had a notion that, by some possibility, there might be descent, consequence, valour, and virtue, out of the fifteen tribes of South Wales; although it were difficult to those who traced, and who could also recite, their descent from Davydd ab Guyllim, the father of Davydd ab Jenau, ab Hywel, ab Cywry, ab Groniwg, ab Meredydd, ab Madog, ab Jorwerth, ab Slwarch, ab Brau, to acknowledge any nobility in these very poor specimens of aristocracy. Accordingly as usual, contempt and envy on the one side, and contempt and satire on the other, had sprung up already between the honest hot Welshmen, and the cool gay gallants, who looked upon them much in the same light as we view New Zealanders; and, as usual, the ladies deserted their accustomed lords, and allowed their phantasies to be engrossed by the brave and handsome Englishmen, to

the great discomfiture of their helpmates and lovers.

To the left of the King, standing, as the host of the castle, (for even if the performance had lasted, as a play often did, a whole day, he would not have sat,)—the stately, lofty form of the Marquis of Worcester, appeared, more like the monarch of the assemblage than the gentle, and refined, yet, at first glance, undignified Charles. And, from time to time, sundry scraps of conversation, which were caught up, passed between the monarch and his subjects, and were carried about the hall, from mouth to mouth.

“Is it true,” whispered Charles, as he beheld the master of the revels with his wand displace George Wharton, who stood behind Blanch, dangling his beaver and plume by his side—“Is it true, that those two young people are betrothed these three years?—See! Edward Herbert is seated by your fair niece. Why not let the nuptials take place this day se’nnight, before we leave Ragland? The youth is of years, and may be knighted, if you will, my lord, anon.”

"Your Majesty is most gracious." The Marquis mused for an instant;—"You see, and please your majesty, the girl is untoward; and that her father is dead, her mother worse than dead, maketh us both to constrain her with such severity as might be suitable. We wish her to love, as well as to marry; for marriage without respect of love is a thorny path, and this damsel—"

"—Why, I comprehend you not," returned the King; "she does—she must affect young Herbert—"

"Must, sir, is a word for a King—seemly in your majesty's condition, but—"

"Well, well, let us not discourse of it now;—more, anon," replied Charles, surprised and disconcerted; but, leaning back an instant afterwards to address the marquis again, the King's manner was changed, for he saw an expression of embarrassment and chagrin upon the countenance of his noble host.

"Your lordship would fain have kept the keys of your citadel from us to-day," said Charles jocularly; "and when we sent

Doctor Baily to fetch the keys of treasure-house,"—the King stopped and smiled.

"I was fain, and please your majesty to bring them myself."

"Hark ye, James!" exclaimed the King, turning to the Duke of Richmond; "thy voice of report hath spoken truth once; for there are those, my lord Marquis, who are unreasonable enough to assert that you have good store of old gold left in the Tower of Gwent, whom I gave no credence, knowing we have exhausted your resources; since I see that you will not trust me with your keys, I am apt to think your reports as they have bruited about are true."

And the King looked cheerfully at him as he spoke; for, impoverished as the royal cause now was, the notion that the Marquis of Worcester was still to befriend it, was one calculated to revive the hopes of the dejected.

"I had no thought," replied the nobleman, bending low, whilst his

sparkled, and an arch smile played upon his lips, "of giving your Majesty such occasion of thought, by this tender of my duty, that I was at one time resolved your majesty, when you honoured my poor house, should have lain in yon great, over-topping building; but that I was loth, if it please you, to commit your majesty to the Tower."

"Well answered," replied Charles, laughing at the reply; so characteristic of a man who, even when a musket ball grazed his head, could not forbear a joke. "Ah! my lord marquis! Have a care you go not there yourself. I should be loth to see these fine walls dismantled; these noble chambers faded," resumed the King, looking around him, after a pause, "like what Camden hath proved, and Basing may—But list!—the players!"

"Knowest thou the name of the piece? or the story thereof?" asked Blanch, just deigning to look round at her affianced, who, to her infinite disgust, had been placed by her side.

"Passions calmed, or the Floating

Island,' composed by Master Strode, the orator, and performed by the scholars of Christ-church, beyond expectation," returned the much-despised Edward Herbert, obsequiously: for all his boasted spirit and disdain vanished in the presence of the young beauty, whose slave he had been from the very cradle, and who now,—in a tight boddice of blue velvet, powdered with pearls, and joined at the bosom by a bow, or knot, clasped together with pearls, set off by the elegant: hose sleeve buttoned up on the arm, whilst one long, rich ringlet hung on her fair neck, partially and becomingly covered by a tippet of point lace over one shoulder: whilst Blanch in all the splendor of that brilliant age, when every smiling sends its hue to the cheek, every reflection is pictured in the clear, soft, eye,—was so bewitching in her indifference, so triumphant in her charms, so fascinating in her tyranny, that all the valour of the young captain of horse, was put to flight.

"(Oh, as Oxford, by boys!" returned Blanch, contemptuously; "mere churls

with their Latin accidents tied behind their backs; how gave they out the moral of the play? and wert thou, Master Herbert, among the great comedians who were thus honoured—I am beside myself when I mention her gracious name—by playing before her majesty, the Queen of Hearts, as Master Wharton hath it? Didst thou enact the hero of the piece?”

“I was Endymion—the—the lover,” said the young man submissively, smoothing down the plume of his hat.

“Mercy! do not bestrew the hall with swan’s—or, it may be, goose—down. And so thou wert the lover, Master Herbert. Who taught *thee* thy part?”

“Nature—fancy—recollection,” answered the young man promptly, and blushing deeply, as he fixed his fine and speaking eyes upon the face which, in disdain, he loved as much, almost as when—but such occasions were rare—it was turned to him in kindness. He gazed for many moments; for a softened expression, a mixture of confusion and of tenderness, sat upon the beautiful features which were pictured in the young man’s memory,

night and day. Blanch, keen-sighted now, upon such points, quickly read his sentiments.

"Wondrous fine talking," she hastened to say, recovering from her confusion. "I wish thou would cease thy discourse, and let me attend unto the play."

"Nay, who spoke first?" asked the young man tenderly, and whispering softly. "Only one question! What knowest *thou* of love? What! no reply!" he pursued, surprised, and charmed by the downcast eye, and deep and instant blush of his betrothed. "But I see, thou art all intent upon the play," added the young man, with intuitive delicacy, refraining from pursuing a strain of conversation so bewitching to him, like all such parleyings, such nonsense to the calm and cool; so entrancing, so important, and so cherished by the ardent and enamoured!

And now, after a prologue had been spoken by a personage in a black velvet mantle, the play proceeded. Grave countenances, and heads weather-beaten and bald, beneath the round black velvet cap

which age then assumed, were bent down, in motionless attention, to listen to a dialogue, to unravel a plot which had much of the mysticism of the present German school in its fabrication, and was more Platonic and philosophical than exciting. Add to this, that the comedy was acted wholly by men and boys; some in periwigs, some in masks, or vizards; for, although females had been generally introduced on the stage, after the example of Henrietta Maria (the first female who acted in this country) had condescended to study and to perform a part in a mask composed by Walter Montague, "as well for her recreation, as for the study of her English," there was a popular objection to these displays on the part of the fair sex; and Charles, more scrupulous (or perhaps more the master) respecting the actions of the female nobility than with regard to his self-willed wife, at present, prudently discountenanced a custom, which Prynne, in his "*Histriomastix*," denounced as "Anti-christian, heathenish, pernicious, intolerant

mischiefs to churches, to republics, to the manners, minds, and souls of men."

The play was of an intolerable length; but then the virtue of patience, which has gone out of fashion in our days, had been well tried by the performances of the moralities and mysteries which had preceded the regular drama, even within the recollection of the King. And Charles had been early initiated into a taste for masques and mummeries by the mute performances of that old piece of curiosity, his regal mother. Besides, the King was a model of propriety and politeness; and, when we remember that there were no newspapers in those times to teach us how to despise; no novels—or only a few dull romances—to interest the fancy, that the secluded great had little variety to enliven their stately monotony,—it is not so much a matter of surprise that "Passions calmed, or the Floating Island," should have met with such an entire and brilliant success.

CHAPTER IX.

Unruly blasts wait on the tender Spring ;
Unwholesome weeds take root with tender flowers ;
The adder hisses where the sweet birds sing ;
What virtue breeds, iniquity devours :
We have no good that we can say is ours,
But ill-annexed opportunity,
Or kills his life, or else his quality.

SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnets*.

BLANCH was wholly absorbed in the play, nor heeded — neither did he who shared her every thought, and watched her every movement — that, in the interim of the two acts into which the play was divided, a banquet was placed within the hall, a space being cleared on the dais for the orsille, or king's high table, whilst a repast was spread for those of inferior ranks. By the monarch's side sat Prince Charles, behind his majesty stood the lord high steward of his house-

hold, with a golden key suspended from his belt : the Marquis of Worcester himself waited upon his royal guest. Grace was said by a clergyman of middle age, and whose acute eye, and lively countenance, bespoke the active mind which had already been deeply engaged in controversy—a dangerous contest, in which defeat is sometimes, as it was in this case, followed by conversion ; for he who now acted as the royal chaplain was the son of a bishop, and is well known as the learned and excellent Dr. Baily, who afterwards abjured the Protestant faith, and whose attempt, upon a subsequent visit of Charles to Ragland, to convert his majesty, proved his zeal in the principles which he had so unhappily adopted.

The repast was costly, cumbrous, heavy, surfeiting, and one of that description which required the appetites of the seventeenth century to relish, and the constitutions of the same period not to die of its effects. Coldly and disapprovingly looked on the King's physician—that grave and sublime genius whose lot it

was to follow his beloved and confiding master from battle to battle, beginning with Edge-Hill; whose learning might have fitted him for a mitre; whose purity would have become a monk; but who combined, in one character of eminent virtue, the speculations of a philosopher with the faith of a Christian. Honoured be his sainted spirit! mild, benevolent Harvey! whose highest fame it alone was not, that he discovered the circulation of the blood, but that he gave to the vast company of that all-important and noble profession which he planted by his efforts, upon an eminence of truth, an example of high purposes, of holy practices; a disdain of little arts, a reverence for the true calling of a physician; an instance of the possible perfection of the character so all-important in society.

With a face not only displaying the pale cast of thought, but the emaciation of one whose mind "o'er-informed the tenement of clay"; his brow high and wrinkled, his eye dark, deep, sunk; his hair short, and free from the vanity of

love-locks, the physician, attired in a black suit, closely confined with black buttons and a black gown thrown over the vest, tied at the sleeves, with tassels, seated himself at the board, below the knights, and took contentedly, and regardless of scoffers, a manchet-loaf and a glass of cold water. In the hurry of the wars, and harassed by his attendance upon the Court, the philosopher had little time to devote to those absorbing studies which he loved; those sciences, the most fascinating of all, which cause the young student of physic often to sigh that he is condemned, for worldly gain, to relinquish the finest of all contemplations, the physiology of the human frame, for a practice most anxious and most revolting. It was not, therefore, a matter of surprise to those who know that, in the seclusion of his turret, Harvey often studied till morning dawned, to find, after a reasonable space of time, that he had vanished from the table, and little notice was taken of an absence that was permitted by the King.

And now the drama re-commenced. It was preceded by an elaborate *dumb show*, depicting to the eye the nature and incidents of the scenes which were to follow; a resource which, while it pointed out the imperfect and crude state of literature, even at this comparatively refined period, was almost necessary before an audience, one-half of whom could not comprehend the language which the performers spoke.

Blanch was again fixedly absorbed in the scenes which, to her simple mind, conveyed all the luxury of entire illusion. Not that the conduct of the plot which proved so bewitching to her young fancy was either skilful or refined; neither would it have suited an English audience of that era had it merely combined the qualities of elegance with poetic fervour; for, although the taste of the educated part of the community had been improved and chastened by the noble works of Shakspeare; although Sackville had introduced the classical drama, and the Moralities and Mysteries had gone wholly out of vogue, a strong attachment to the

spirit of those last-mentioned representations remained.

The populace at the Globe and Blackfriars' Theatre still loved, that the most solemn scenes and pathetic incidents should be mingled with the broadest and coarsest humour. The country squires, and the Welsh gentry, scarcely more refined than the London populace, completely coincided with them in taste (and, if the truth be spoken, agree with them still, even in our own day). And Blanch in her ignorance, and the enthusiasm of her romance, thought the play perfection. Its violation of the unities of time and place, its turgidity and bombast, even its freedom, were faults not perceived by one whose heart was deeply interested in a romantic, improbable, impossible, yet feeble love-story, in which an union of two faithful hearts was effected by preternatural means. She lent it every credence; and a deep sigh broke from her when the last scene was ended, and Epilogue, in his velvet mantle, came forth from a side scene, and talked, in set

rhymes, about Zephyr, Adam, Eden, Sappho, Phaon, Orpheus, and Moses; and then the performers, who all remained standing on the stage, suddenly sank upon their knees; in an instant, the hall, which had rung with shouts of applause, was still: the King arose, and, folding his hands, meekly knelt down before the throne; the courtiers followed his example; peers, clergy, warriors, ladies, servants, and players upraised their hands and eyes—perchance, their hearts—in a solemn petition to the Giver of all good, that He would bless the King and Queen, and protect, in His especial Providence, the master of that house. Soft voices, that had but an instant before whispered accents of kindness to young gallants, were mingled with the utterance of the devout, the ambitious, the thoughtless, the humble, the great. It was the custom of that time. Even the poor despised player, forced to utter profane jests, or scurrilous allusions, he, too, the minion of amusement to the high and wealthy, seemed, if he felt it

not, to join in the devotion of the hour. The stillness was complete: in an instant, it was succeeded by the noise of Babel. The King left the hall, attended only by a chosen number of his servants, who supped with his majesty in his private chamber. The marquis, scarcely less stately, withdrew also. The squires and knights were hastening to scramble for apartments in the castle; their wives and daughters hurrying to make up for even ten minutes of compulsory silence by double diligence in the use of their tongues; the body-guards were already arrayed along the passages through which his majesty was to pass: Gwyllim had struck some chords of his harp, to commemorate the high occasion; whilst musicians were crowding into the music gallery, to play for those lower members of the company who were but too well disposed, after a substantial and hearty supper, to dance, until the rules of a well-ordered mansion should drive them into their dormitories, some half mile long, in the great court.

Blanch, confused, and still dreaming of the happy, eventful loves of Endymion, and his ladye, found herself in the crowd protected alone by Edward Herbert. It was not considered decorous in those days for a young gentleman to offer his arm to a lady : to touch the tip of her little finger was happiness and honour enough.

“ Where is Lord Arundel ? where is Cecily ? ” exclaimed Blanch impatiently, breaking away from her betrothed ;—and moving, or attempting to move, among a crowd of hale squires, gay military, and courtiers of gallant demeanour, by whom the beauty of the evening—the white rose of Somerset, as Blanch was now called—could not pass unnoticed. But no attention could have annoyed her so much as that which pointed her out as the affianced bride of the admired, and, by his comrades, beloved, Herbert. And the expressions — “ Happy Herbert ! ” — “ There they go together ! ” — “ When is the knot to be tied ? ” — “ Gives the king the bride, or the lord marquis ? ” reached her, and, as she felt by the trembling hand which

held hers, were not unobserved by Edward. But a stronger feeling possessed her at this moment, even than her cherished disdain. A sudden alarm had seized her. Wherefore had Cecily gone out? She asked the question of Edward, but he could not tell, — “He had not noted — he had been engrossed with the play, or —”

“No matter with what, — that is little to the purpose,” was the hurried reply. — “Tease me not with untimely compliments,” added Blanch, impetuously. “But oh!” she added, stopping short in the midst of a long corridor, and clasping her hands, “if aught has befallen my aunt!”

“Thou carest for her, then? — yet could hear of my mishap at Roundway Down without one kind message to me,” said Edward, looking reproachfully, yet still kindly at his affianced bride.

“Have we time to parley when my aunt may be sick or sad?” returned Blanch, throwing open the door of Lady Cecily’s appropriated apartments, when a sight presented itself which struck alike the lover and his mistress with sudden dumbness.

Lord Arundel was supporting, partly on his knees, and partly reclined on a couch, the child, for whose return prayers had been offered up for weeks, months, wrung from the yearning hearts of his parents. Yes! the young prisoner was there. He had been restored, — a merciful Providence had brought the child back to his home,—to die.

Pallid and unconscious, he rested upon that arm which would have fought until death to have saved him. His head was pillowed on the bosom of his father. His mother knelt beside him; the grave and wise physician to whom the life of the monarch was entrusted, was holding his slender wrist, counting the fluttering and feeble pulse, life's time-piece, of which the rapid, delicate strokes might scarcely yet be perceptible, even to him who hath showed that blood has life. A deep, ominous silence reigned in that apartment; even as if stillness might restore the affrighted spirits, and recall the fugitive strength of the dying child, who had sunk into a swoon, from exhaustion of

strength, immediately upon his entrance into the castle.

A few words broke that silence. They were uttered in gasping, by the heart-broken mother. "He is gone!" she exclaimed, as she knelt, grasping with one hand her other child, and holding in the other the small, wasted, parched hands, so passive in her pressure.

"No, madam," — was the physician's prompt, decisive reply, — "he has but fainted."

"And think you," asked the agitated father, his lips quivering as he spoke "that any restorative, or nutriment, will bring back the failing strength, or—or—" his voice sank away, and was hollow and low, as he put the searching question — "Can my child be saved?"

"There is yet hope, whilst he breathes," answered the physician, dashing the warm temples with some fragrant waters, and moistening the motionless lips with vinegar—"Nature, or God!" he added, looking upwards, "are all-protecting to the young plant, which hath a vitality that

we, who have half run our course, know not."

"O my darlings!" broke out Lady Cecily, unconscious that any one was present,—"little did thy fond mother think, that, whilst she was delicately tended, ye, my sweet treasures! were in sickness, and sad,—and misused, and pining for your home!" The last words were lost in hysteric gaspings, bursting from the heart, which had never known such sorrow—which could know no such sorrow as a mother's bereavement.

"He shall be avenged!" said Lord Arundel, bending down over the wasted form of his son,—“My Everard! my boy!”

“Lord Arundel! Lady Cecily!” exclaimed, at this moment, a person who came hastily forward from the darkest recesses of the room, “believe that I have not been faithless to my promise—that I have done my endeavour;—that, if I could have saved your child, even with the sacrifice of my life,” added the young man in great agitation, “it would have been”—

“ Mr. Godolphin, I believe you ; and do we not owe to you,” returned Lord Arundel, with an effort at calmness, “ that our child is restored to us ? that his mother, my poor Cecily, will have the solace of tending his sick bed—of ”

“ —We must forget that we ever had him !” was the agonized expression of Cecily, as she threw herself, passionately, on the couch, beside her son.

“ Yet, see ! he is revived !” cried Blanch, coming forward, with an accent so confident, a look so bright, that she appeared like a vision of hope in the vale of sorrow, — (and it is one privilege and blessing of the young, that their inexperience of sorrow, their sanguine nature, cast a bright gleam around them, even to the view of those most assured of their afflictions,)—will not prayer ?” she added solemnly ; — but she checked herself, — “ these are judgments, perchance,” was the serious and awful reflection which rebuked her hope in the efficacy of her prayer.

She looked up, — for some one entered, — and the calm, yet sorrowing, face of

her aunt, Lady Arundel, the sombre mourning of her attire, and the deep respect with which all who were present stood back, while she advanced to look upon the child, showed how, even in sorrow, the influence of a strong mind, and of a superior character, checks the violence of passion, and hallows the scene where they preside.

Lady Arundel calmly entreated that all would retire, except the parents of the child and the physician; her words were law—her injunctions were instantly obeyed—and each individual withdrew to his respective apartment.

CHAPTER X.

Your counsels may my thanks engage,
But not my love controul :
Alas ! such juleps ne'er assuage
This fever of the soul.

PRIOR.

It was a day or two after the return of Everard and Claude, that Blanch, after devoting herself unremittingly to the attendance of the dying child, went to shrive herself within the parish church of Ragland. For days her mind had been engrossed in the one absorbing theme—the sickness of a child,—and there is no theme so absorbing. Disease and health are alike beautiful in childhood ; the one is cheering, the other affecting. — The feeble voice, the lucid yet sunken eye ; the small, soft limbs ; the helpless accents, the unconsciousness, the dependence, the patience, induced by feebleness, the pitiful

look, the heart-rending moan, leave but little power in the witness of the infant's death-bed to withdraw one's thoughts from the object of fondness and pity.

And Blanch had the affection of an elder sister for the child. She could recollect distinctly the joy of his birth; she had cradled him in her arm, a bond of union, so winning and tenacious, as to cause the young mother oftentimes to forget her offspring for her nursling!—She had sported with him on the green-sward of Wardour, before dismay and ruin had visited that home of her infancy; and she had offered herself as a hostage for him, when the fine creature was led off by his gaolers, whose neglect combined home-sickness—that worst of sickness—with a fever, the result of damp habitations and bad food, to bring him to his grave. She had offered herself—would that it had been accepted!—for then the loved and cherished one would have been safe—the orphan, the erring, nay, the sinning one, might have died, innocent of the con-

sciousness which sat heavily upon her heart;—for often, in the night-watch, Blanch had sat, shivering at the idea which began to possess her mind, that her secret affection for a heretic and a rebel was a crime not to be pardoned, unless atoned. Her superstitious fears chilled her through the dread hours of darkness — by day, they vanished; yet she longed to disburthen herself, and to seek godly counsel how to walk in future, — nay, she would fain have had recourse to charms and philters to cure her wayward fancies,—but that a store of good sense told her, in spite of education, in spite of the wild romance of her native hills, that there was but one balm for the wounded spirit — prayer. She repaired, then, to the village church of Ragland, where Pauzani was appointed to meet her. She walked, attended by a servant, like herself wrapped in a muffler, and each wearing a small black mask; for it was, in those days, deemed inconsistent for the high-born lady to walk abroad beyond the terrace, from

beneath the topiary-work of some lime-tree-covered walk, with her face exposed to vulgar view. A large fan, unfurled, (for the sun was not so powerful as to require its aid,) was constructed of ostrich feathers, hung by a richly-wrought silver handle over the fair arm, which, partly covered by a perfumed glove, appeared from beneath the kirtle of black silk; whilst a foot, of aristocratic smallness, clad in an embroidered silk stocking, peeped from beneath a full and flowing gown, displaying a shoe, in imitation of a Venetian *chopine*, mounted upon a heel rather approaching to the nature of a stilt; and Blanch, even at this disadvantage, walked nimbly, and, as it might seem, gaily, along; yet her heart was very sad. Her thoughts were full of dismal images, her spirits were oppressed by an indefinite dread of God's heavy judgment — a dread which can scarcely be sustained by the strongest mind, but which is too oppressive to the young not to be even overwhelming.

The square embattled tower of Ragland

church was soon in view, and Blanch's heart throbbed when she saw the pile in which her ancestors slept in peace. They were at rest; and Blanch, who, in the fulness of her heart, like the young, generally exaggerated the cause of her sorrows, wished herself at rest there also; for self-reproach is the heavier burden—that we have no one to divide our griefs; they are all our own.

The soft eyes of the susceptible girl were moistened with tears as she said to her attendant, old Margery, "Thou art certain that the holy Father named three o' the clock?"

"By my troth, he did," replied Margery; "and, hark! the chimes are just now playing." And the good Catholic crossed herself as the melodious, baptized bells of Ragland struck up a slow mass tune (doubtless arranged by Tallis) to announce the third watch.

Blanch walked slowly into the church. It was warm, though October was now far advanced, for there is everything in a Roman Catholic church to encourage,

not repel devotion. In our Protestant churches, on the other hand, the old, the infirm, or the heart-stricken—they who alone repair to weekly services—are chilled by a damp, sepulchral atmosphere in a church which is warmed only for the numerous assemblage of the Sabbath devotion. Such is our carnal nature, that it languishes when the blood creeps and the fingers are nipped; and we feel as if we were entombed already in the vaults below.

An odour of incense gave, also, the consciousness that every hour, every day, the service of the Most High was proffered up within the pile. Nor was the church desolate; here and there, a villager, or a rude mountaineer, was telling his beads before a shrine; the market-women, hurrying home to some distant village, from Monmouth, passed not by that holy edifice, but dropped upon their knees, thankful for the opportunity, from which no turmoil of business—and they have their turmoils as well as the dwellers in cities—could divert them. And Margery, after bending

with her young mistress before the holy font, and crossing herself with holy water, sank upon her knees also, and was soon absorbed in the mechanical devotions, which have but this merit—that they are performed upon principle.

The banners of the entombed Somersets waved to and fro with the breeze admitted through the porch, as Blanch, downcast in demeanour, and humble in spirit, walked up the aisle to the chapel on the north side of the church. Here, beneath a shrine, upon which candles were still burning for the rest of his soul, reposed the remains of her father, Lord John Somerset, whose memory she fondly revered: for it had never been permitted to the young girl to speak of her mother, Blanch sank upon her knees—she knelt upon the carved brass, upon which the name and effigies of her father were engraved:—she knelt, and lifted up her heart to God: for there prescribed prayers were useless—her lips refused to utter them: the thoughts and petitions which rushed into her heart, the self-abasement

could not be comprised within the cold and measured strains of a ritual in a foreign tongue. And her tears fell fast upon the pavement of that retired spot, as, blessing her father's name, and recommending his spirit to the Virgin, the young votary arose and contemplated, for a few moments, the objects around her. The chapel—afterwards desecrated in the ruin of the Somersets—was filled by the grandeur, and teemed with the exploits, of her family. Above, their banners, with many quarterings and mottos, painted for especial deeds of honour, hung, until the emissaries of the self-denying ordinance cut them down. Around, below, were the rich sepulchres of a prosperous and favoured race, intended to arrest the transitory glories of our mundane state, and to perpetuate them in the hearts of their descendants. But these things, or, at least, their moral, to the heart, had never before been noted by Blanch. If it is not surprising that those born to the inheritance of family honours should think of them, as they generally do, but slightly; it is

not a matter of wonderment that they can walk within the aisles of their parochial churches, and scarcely reflect that, amongst a rural poor, all around tells them, and *them* only, of their worldly greatness. The lesson of pride is inculcated even beneath the vaulted roof of the house of prayer. And Blanch trembled as she gazed; for she reflected that these, her progenitors, revered and feared, were all sound and orthodox Papists, who would have disclaimed the child who dared to love a heretic. She shrank from her reflections, and, entering the chancel, meekly sank down before the confessional, awaiting the arrival of Puzani.

It was an orifice, half concealed between rich tracery, but, revealing within, the groined roof of a miniature chapel, before which Blanch knelt. A sliding door was soon withdrawn, and through the quiet church, for a time, a soft murmur of a young voice, broken by sighs, was indistinctly heard. But, presently, the figure of Blanch was seen ascending some steps—then it vanished into an inner

confessional; and thence no secrets, save at the last confession of the just and unjust, at the judgment-seat, might ever issue.

Pale, in tears, with her head bowed down, and her step tottering, Blanch, at the end of an hour, issued from the confessional. Margery was waiting for her in the porch. They crossed the churchyard, but, ere they quitted it, Blanch turned back and looked mournfully upon the tower.

"I never thought," she said tearfully, to Margery, "to look with such sorrow as I must ever do upon that church, where I was baptized, where I have so often gone to matins, where—"

"Where you will go anon to your bridal, my heart," said the nurse coaxingly.

"Bridal! I sicken at the very word, Margery. Oh, Margery!" cried Blanch, throwing herself upon the green-sward; "I am such a sinner—such a castaway—such an unhappy creature!"

"Mercy on us! what now?" cried

Margery, holding up her hands. "Why isn't all the world a-trying to please thee? Isn't there Master Herbert as would kiss thy shoe-tye, if thou wouldst? Is not there Master Sidney Godolphin—"

"—Do not so much as name him," cried Blanch, a little calmer in her manner. "He's gone hence—is he not, Margery?"

"No, my heart. I heard, in the buttery, that he stays for his pass—the king will not give it to him as yet; he must needs 'bide awhile."

"Will not give it to him! how is that? Is he made a prisoner? Is he not safe, Margery?" exclaimed Blanch, aroused, and, springing up, she began walking towards the castle very speedily.

"—But it is for Master Herbert thou must wear the willow," replied Margery, who began to be a little wiser than Blanch conjectured; "thou *will* fret when he goes away?"

"I ought," returned Blanch, moodily.

Margery said no more; and they had gained the drawbridge before Blanch spoke again. "I am sad to-day, Margery;

I am going to walk upon the terrace. Send Janet to me with tidings of Everard. 'Twill but be just half an hour ere I come in," added Blanch, not daring to meet the eyes of the inquisitive, fond servant.

"Mind thou goest not too near the moat," cried Margery, seeing the feet of the young damsel move in a very careless, sliding way, as she went towards the grand terrace. "She 's just like her mother!" thought the nurse, as she went into the first court, and crossed into some of the offices.

"—He avoided me, 'tis certain," said Blanch, to herself, as she walked slowly upon the terrace, beside a row of elms still remaining, beneath which King Charles oftentimes took an afternoon's stroll; for the terrace, flanked by walls, from the niches of which the Roman Emperors, admirably chiselled, looked sternly on the passer by, was a spot retired, and appropriated to the higher members of the Somerset family. Around rose the proud walls, finished with the delicacy and skill of a refined age; whilst towers,

massive and grand, threw their deep shadows athwart the mossy turf.

"Last night," thus ruminated Blanch, "although the occasion were sad—yet, since we had not met for months, since—since—but no matter. He can avoid me. I—shame be on my heart, that I would encounter any risk to see him—to speak to him once more, though only of our captive days. Besides," she added, as she paced along, excusing herself to herself, "had I not much to ask touching Wardour? How true it may be that it is all a mass of crumbling ruins! The conduit too—I ought to ask about that, before I tell my aunt of the rumour; 'twill be cruel to chagrin her needlessly; 'twill be a shame not to have some parley with him concerning that. Even Father Panzani might absolve me of that matter."

But the recurrence to Father Panzani brought back countless scruples, which had vanished before the intoxicating consciousness that Godolphin was near her, that he dwelt under the same roof, breathed the same atmosphere, listened to

the same sounds, communed with the same people. Repentance, which had thriven under the shadow of adversity, dwindled away into a consumptive delicacy ; she had been absolved, and, although a certain uneasy sentiment remained, it was like the tenderness of a wound that had, but a short time ago, been throbbing.

As Blanch walked, she came to the extremity of the terrace, and looked out upon the fair and wooded park beyond ; and discerned a horseman riding towards her. Instantly, imagination defined the indistinct and distant object.

“ It is he ! ” she exclaimed, whilst the colour suffused her cheeks ; “ I know him by that gallant bearing, by that gay and gracious air, by his figure so mature and manly—he sees me ! ” and she drew from her bosom an embroidered kerchief—waved it—and then, ashamed of her forwardness, sat down upon one of the ramparts, with her back to the graceful equestrian.

He would seek her, she felt assured—for he had deferentially returned her

salute, bending low on his saddle, and holding his plumed hat for some moments in his hand. And Blanch sat, with a throbbing heart, on the rough mouth of a cannon, expecting his arrival.

She felt ashamed and confused when hasty steps warned her of his approach, and a voice, thanking her most humbly for her courtesy and condescension, met her ear, and an extended hand her eye. She turned impetuously away—it was Edward Herbert!

“It was not thee that I beckoned to,” she said contemptuously; “somebody older, taller, more proper, and—have the courtesy to leave me—am I never to be alone?”

“Just now,” said the young man, with all due humility, “thou didst not wish to be alone—nay, Blanch,” he added, biting his lip with vexation, “why this needless caprice? Treat me but as a cousin, and let us part kindly,—for part we soon must.”

“Is there then going to be an engagement?” asked Blanch, looking up, with

such a sad, earnest expression in her eyes, that Edward Herbert was instantly disarmed.

"If I could hope that thou wouldst feel the slightest interest in my safety—that thou wouldst ever think of one who is for ever—"

"Oh! put all these fine sayings into rhyme, and let Gwyllim sing them," interrupted Blanch, rising. "I must go within."

"And I," said Edward, walking by her side, "to see the prisoners tried before the King."

"The prisoners! what prisoners?" cried Blanch, stopping short, and grasping the arm of her cousin; "they will not try them? Besides, he has had a safe-conduct."

Edward Herbert looked at her surprised. "These are only some gentlemen," he said, after a few moments' hesitation, "of the county, who are accused of malignancy. They have been examined in private; but one of them, who protests his innocence, demands an audience in the great hall. Shouldst thou desire to view the scene, I will, if thou

permit, conduct thee to a safe staircase behind the music gallery, where thou mayst look down from the window into the hall. Thou art too young, and too comely, Blanch, to bear the rude gaze of an assembly."

"I wish it not, in troth," replied Blanch. "Knowest thou what revels the court holds to-night?"

"There will be dancing in the gallery; then a banquet. Thine hand, dear Blanch, for a measure?"

"Thou tread a measure, with thy banded knee? Trust me, I shall dance with one who hath two legs. I never could endure a partner who moves to slow time,—only. Forgive me, Edward," she cried, an instant afterwards, struck by the expression of pain on his countenance: "I will dance with thee, if—if—but it will do thee some injury to dance."

"Time was," said the young betrothed resentfully, "when thou hast jibed at me that I had never known a wound—never seen a battle—done no service to my country; and now, when I am heart and hand in the conflict—when I am fighting

my way to fame—when I have a troop of horse,” added the young soldier, raising his voice, “I am but a mark for thy sneers, an object for thy uttermost contempt. God knows! Blanch, how we, who are coupled together by Fate, shall run the race! There should be love to make life’s pilgrimage easy, not alone on one side.”

“I do not gainsay that; but an if I *cannot* give it?” She spoke vehemently, and her affianced bridegroom turned round panic-struck. He gazed upon the speaking face which could not look a falsehood, and an expression of unwonted distress and surprise overspread the countenance of the young man.

“For Mercy’s sake! say not to my aunt Arundel that I answered you thus!” cried Blanch, suddenly recollecting herself; “and think of it no more. And yet,” she added, “and yet”——

But they had reached the postern door which opened into the Fountain court; and, rushing up a flight of steps, Blanch turned quickly down a passage, and thus escaped from her dismayed lover.

CHAPTER XI.

Already hath the day grown gray with age ;
And, in the west, like to a conqueror crown'd,
Is faint with too much glory. On the ground
He flings his dazzling arms ; and, as a sage,
Prepares him for a cloud-capt hermitage
Where Meditation meets him at the door ;
And all around—on wall, on roof, and floor—
Some pensive star unfolds its silver page
Of Truth, which God's own hand hath testified.

Evening.—LAMAN BLANCHARD.

THE hall was still, although crowded, when Edward Herbert made his way into it ; and the voice of one speaker, in a low, yet earnest, tone, was the only sound that fell upon his ear. The King was seated under the cloth of estate at the raised end of the hall ; the marquis, his host, and the few members of the court who had not been obliged to leave Ragland for the camp, stood below, arranged upon the steps of the daïs. Behind the monarch, the set, staid, punctilious air of the Duke

of Richmond,—and, to the King's left hand, the composed, but pensive, countenance of the Marquis of Newcastle,—formed a lively contrast to the humorous expression of the young Prince Charles, who stood by his father's side, almost leaning upon the chair of state, to the right.

Before his majesty stood four gentlemen of Monmouthshire, manacled ;—men, hitherto of honourable character and condition, who had been accused by enemies, —persons of known loyalty and fidelity— of a conspiracy to injure the King, and toabet the cause of his enemies. They had been apprehended and brought to Ragland, where, whilst the feast of Saint Michael had been held—whilst friend met friend, and the social board rang with merriment—whilst the pageant and the comedy had passed gaily in review, and the light foot of the young and happy had beaten the floor to the sounds of music,— these gentlemen had been immured in those deep and noiseless dungeons, where never sounds of human fellowship, save

their own dismal forebodings and communings, might meet their ear.

They looked pale and agitated,—all, save one, who spoke bravely and forcibly to his own innocence and that of his companions. He was concluding, when Edward entered, an animated defence; and, vast as was the hall, and numerous the assemblage who came to listen to the pleading, interesting to those who knew the defendants well, not a whisper was heard during the earnest protestations and explanations of the accused.

The King listened with great attention. Time, experience, misfortune, had wrought a wonderful change in the mental attributes, as well as in the character, of the monarch. His faculties, which had lain dormant in seasons of luxury, had been aroused by the necessities of his condition, and by his having to cope, in intellectual strength, with a parliament and a portion of his nobility of singular capacity for business, and of the most cultivated understandings on all practical points. Habits of personal activity, which are invaluable

to a man of a vacillating, gentle character, had also sharpened powers which previous culture had enriched; and those who had, in the early part of Charles's career, attributed to him weakness and obstinacy combined, and a contraction of mind which precluded all further improvement, were fain to confess that, in this middle part of his course, his energy and the strength of his judgment, when unshackled by an intriguing host of friends who oft-times proved his worst foes, augured well as a presage of the heroism of his last years.

And on this occasion—one of those minor incidents, through which we peep into the thoughts and intentions of men—the king rose above the vindictive faction by which the Monmouthshire gentlemen had been assailed; he read in the depositions against them, he perceived in their defence, that the heartburnings of provincial feuds had aggravated the accusations which had produced their disgrace. Willingly would Charles—for his heart, which never, save in the case of Strafford,

failed in its truth—have acquitted and dismissed the prisoners ; but he was himself not free ; and the worst species of thralldom is that of pecuniary obligation ; the worst kind of bondage is that which opinion throws around its captives. He would have acquitted them, but he dared not ; and he adopted a middle course ; he remanded them to durance, not, however, of the dungeon, but, of the guard-room.

As the accused retired, deep murmurs of displeasure broke from the assembled company ; nor could even the respect and loyalty of the lord of Ragland subdue his accustomed candour, nor restrain his plain-speaking. For he regarded Charles, whom he had known from infancy, as a boy in experience, a mere tyro in king-craft, compared to the sententious James, his father, whose theoretic wisdom well accorded with the absolute notions of the marquis.

“ And wherefore, an’ please your majesty,” he said, bending his tall form over the King, who was still sitting, “ have you only sent these malignants to durance ?

What to do?—what to do? To poison the garrison, and to influence the minds of your majesty's leal subjects?"

"My lord marquis," replied the king, stammering, as he always did when hurried or agitated, his soft, but weak, voice scarcely distinguishable, and contrasted with the deep, manly tones of his host, "they were accused of them of an opposite faction; we give them fair play. We think it not meet that a commission of oyer and terminer should sit for matters so puerile. It will do our cause much benefit," he added, whispering to the marquis, as he rose and led the way to the withdrawing room, "to pardon and attach to us for ever these supposed delinquents. Thinketh my lord marquis as we do?" added the king, fixing his eyes, with a kind smile, upon the heated visage of the disconcerted peer, and laying his hand gently on the shoulder of the marquis.

"In troth not, craving your majesty's pardon," returned the marquis, respectfully; yet a smile lighted up his countenance as

he added, shaking his head, "and your majesty may chance to gain the kingdom of Heaven by such doings as these;—but if ever you gain the kingdom of England by such ways, I will be your bondman."

"Alas!" said Charles, sitting down, "I am well nigh weary of troubles and turmoils; which, to my thinking, are not to be compared, as many have likened them, to a storm at sea, which yet wanteth not its terror; but to an earthquake, shaking the very foundations of all; than which, nothing hath more terror." The King arose as he spoke, and paced to and fro the withdrawing room. It was a noble chamber, enriched by rare carving, by pictures, and sculpture; and the motto of the Somersets, bestowed by the Tudor monarchs, was wrought in the panels, in characters which seemed indelible. And it appeared to those who knew the sanguine temper of the monarch well, that now, on the eve of his leaving Ragland, again to enter upon all the bloody tumults of civil war, he looked with a fond and ominous regret upon those walls, where

a sense of security, honour, observance, respect, and accustomed splendour had enabled him, for a time, to forget his private anxieties and the national calamities.

"There is so little security to be placed in men's affections," resumed the King, turning from a window, whence he had gazed for some moments upon a prospect of exceeding, though fading, beauty. "Thou, Lindesay," said Charles, addressing the brave and faithful servant, who, being the Colonel of the King's body-guard, remained, whilst other military commanders were daily leaving, to rejoin the forces,— "Thou, Lindesay, well knowest how I distinguished Algernon Percy. I sought, indeed, to compensate him for the sorrows, I may say injuries, which his father, Lord Northumberland, sustained in the powder-plot; and Algernon had more than my preference. I courted him as my mistress, I conversed with him as my friend, without intermission or interruption of ceremony or business. And ye see how he hath requited me!"

“Your majesty hath still some faithful, some attached, nay, devoted servants,” exclaimed Lindesay, bending down, and kissing, with passionate emotion, the King’s hand.

“— And this Godolphin!” pursued Charles, grasping for an instant, with some agitation, the hand of Lindesay,— “He is of a Royalist, of an ancient, and brave family. Alas, my lords! it is a war in which father is divided against his son, brother encountereth brother, in the ranks of death! Sidney Godolphin’s brothers have signalised themselves under our banners, and yet this unhappy recreant —”

“— Miscreant, rather, let it please your majesty to call him,” interposed the Marquis of Worcester.

“It pleaseth me not, my friend, to call men by ill names. Let our country judge between me and my parliament. Let England, if God crown not our arms with victory, prove whether she find not, hereafter, those the greatest tyrants whose pride was formerly the least disposed to

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the obedience of lawful institutions, and whose licentious humours most pretended conscientious liberties. When goes Godolphin hence? To-morrow?"

"Never! Were I monarch," said Prince Charles vehemently, "I would send him to yonder turret, whence he might chance to see our bannerets flying o' the top of Bristol citadel, or there be room in my lord marquis's dungeons, which run, as rumour saith, under the great hall—nay, beneath these very chambers."

"Spoken like his mother!" whispered Lord Newcastle to Lord Lindesay. "That boy wants not valour; like the queen, he hath much of the spirit of Henry the Great, with the *diablerie*—to use a phrase her majesty well loves,—of the odious Medici. Your highness forgets," said the earl gravely, and in a tone of admonition to the prince, "that Master Sidney Godolphin hath a safe-conduct."

"— Never broken by the Cavaliers," observed George Wharton in an audible whisper.

“ ‘Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves,’ ” said Charles ; “ there are some men, my son, who have so much of the serpent’s subtilty, that they forget the dove’s simplicity. Let it not be thy case. And what is mine host moralizing upon ? ” added the king more cheerfully ; for no temper was more elastic, no sorrows more evanescent than those of the unfortunate, but not unhappy, Charles ; and the slightest ebullition of petulance was as rare as even the natural and involuntary indulgence of regret and disappointment.

“ My solution of the affairs of state is derived, an please your majesty, from an augury,” replied the marquis ;—“ nay, my lord ! there is no need that you should carry away your royal pupil,” he added, addressing Lord Newcastle—“ let him listen to that which befel my son, Glamorgan, at Carnarvon. Glamorgan, speak for thyself.”

“ Excuse me,” said Glamorgan, “ casting his eyes upon the ground, and hesitating—“ I fear to offend, where all,” and he glanced at Lord Newcastle and Lord Lindesay, “ are not of the same communion.”

“ I absolve thee, from all offence, my lord.—No offence, Newcastle? James, no offence?—no offence, Lindesay?” said the king.

“ None, if your majesty finds none,” was the prompt reply of James Stuart, and was instantly accorded to by the others.

“ I chanced to be at Carnarvon, where, over the gate of the Castle,” said Glamorgan, in gentle accents, “ your majesty may remember it—there is the head of King Edward the First, with a crown upon his head?”

“ I have noted it ” said the king.

“ Discoursing with, some gentlemen of the town I heard an old prophecy, just—insomuch as related to *that* crown—most especially fulfilled. There hath long been a tradition, that a magpie should build his nest in that crown—such hath been the fact. Then should there come a jackdaw, and beat away the magpie:—persons, who have watched, affirm that a jackdaw did most rebelliously and obstreperously drive from his old habitation the innocent and loquacious occupant.

Then," pursued the earl, his countenance becoming serious as he spoke, "the voice of prophecy again proclaimed, that the jackdaw should be driven from his abode, by what—an please your majesty?"

"The owl," returned the king, "that bird of ill omen, the dread of mothers and nurses? for the screech owl, old women declare, destroys young infants by sucking their blood, as they lie in their cradles. What says our immortal bard, George Wharton?"

"The lines," replied George Wharton, "run thus, sire:—

'We talk of goblins, *owls*, and elvish sprites;
If we obey them not, this will ensue,
They'll suck our breath, and pinch us black and blue.'

"It was not," resumed Lord Glamorgan, gravely, "the owl"—he paused, and then added solemnly—"perchance it will be best to disclose to your majesty in private the close of this far-famed—and, as I grieve to say, well-known prophecy."

"No," returned Charles hesitatingly, yet changing colour. "We are all trusty, here, I think. Proceed,"—yet there was

uneasiness in his manner; for that was an age in which “no natural exhalations in the sky”—no incidents in the meaner earth, but had their peculiar signification indicative of destiny. It was an age when—

“Prodigies and signs
Abortives, presages, and tongues of Heaven”

had, each and all, their interpreters; when even the spirited and experienced Lady Fanshawe believed in the Irish apparition of the Benshie; when monitory shrieks from the tutelary genius of a family were *heard* to precede the death of its chief members; or the last agonies were solemnized by domestic spirits, who hovered over the dying, filling the air with solemn music; when flames, seen by night, playing upon the tops of the soldiers' lances, or flickering among the masts and sails of ships, denoted defeat—or tempest;—when even the dimmed lights of the household chamber betrayed, to the minds of the believing, the presence of unearthly beings; when omens furnished our greatest of poets with subjects for the noblest imagery;

and when all that was imaginary and superstitious was held to firmly;—much that was sacred and important was matter of sceptical inquiry;—and Charles, even if he rose in theory above the fallacious apprehensions of the multitude, was not wholly proof against their influence when they affected his own uncertain and eventful fortunes. “I charge thee to proceed,” he reiterated. “I am not afraid to hear—only let it not go hence; the minds of our soldiery are so readily alarmed by good or bad auguries. Well, my lord?”

“*Was it an owl?*” asked Prince Charles, who was hovering near the door, to which his preceptor had led him.

“No,” said Lord Glamorgan, worse; “a bird of prey, the buzzard, who drave,” continued the philosopher, hurriedly, “the jackdaws from their usurped rest, and beat them savagely. But, your majesty must note, these birds, the jackdaws, as it was found when the nest was inspected, had built in a material they never built in before—the white-thorn; by a circle of

which insignia of our Saviour's martyrdom the kingly crown was closely and curiously encompassed."

"It is no matter!" said the king after a few moments of deep silence—"my lord marquis, here," he added, recovering from an oppressive sense of danger, and a confusion of spirits, "can well interpret, like most of his faith, this prophecy. How read it you, my lord? hath it been fulfilled?"

"Not all, —an please your majesty. The magpies" continued the marquis, musing,—“those be your bishops whom the Roundheads thus call;—then come the Presbyterian jackdaws, and rout them from their quarters; whilst they in their turn are vanquished by the Independent buzzards; and who will come next,” added the marquis, his voice suddenly sinking to a whisper, “God only knows! but ’tis ominous that the King’s crown should be encircled with thorns.”

“Our destinies are in *His* hands,” said Charles, “who ruleth the sea,—and even the waves obey Him. Let us to the gal-

lery, my lord, for I hear the distant notes of the tabors, to refresh our vexed spirits."

"Yet suffer me, sir," replied the marquis, as he attended his majesty to the gallery, "to offer a moral, as well as a solution of the prophecy. The King's crown at Carnarvon was an *open*, not an imperial, crown: so all parties, our holy Church, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and the like could meddle with it; but had it been close—with the holy cross at the top, those rapacious birds, could not have intermeddled with it."

"So thou hast solved the riddle according to thy fashion, my friend," replied Charles, smiling, yet shaking his head, as he entered the gallery.

CHAPTER XII.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was a clear cold evening, and as the lights gleamed from the gallery windows upon the artificial platform which formerly surrounded nearly the whole of Ragland Castle, they gleamed upon the figures of two persons walking leisurely enough, considering the season, along the fortifications, undisturbed by the occasional passing of the word by the sentinels, or by the still more exciting sounds of music and merriment above. The moon shed her rays upon this solitude-loving pair ; a white arm, a kerchief, sometimes hastily raised to the face,

were disclosed beneath the dark muffler of the female figure ; a fine, though slight, form appeared, notwithstanding the disguise of a cloak, to characterise her male companion ; they were young, comely and alone. Why was it that no familiarity as of persons exclusively interested in each other, marked their interview ? Why was it that often they seemed on the point of parting, and yet turned and walked, and walked again ?

“ In yonder chamber,” said the voice of one of the parties, sorrowfully, “ where, thou seest the casement open, and flowers set’ upon the outer ledge : there, whilst the sounds of merriment are heard in the gallery, my poor Cecily sits watching his slumbers. I cannot join the dance ; I cannot mingle with the gay ; I am sick at heart, and wish not for such a scene.”

“ That I gainsay not ; but wherefore,” answered Sidney Godolphin, “ risk you your peace of mind—your good credit with the court, the displeasure of your family, to seek converse with one de-

spised and contemned by all good Royalists. Wherefore do you risk your—your—”

“— What mean you?” answered Blanch, in a low tone.

“ Your good name. For betrothed as you are to another, the world may reasonably impugn your faith to him; it will not give you credit for high and worthy motives, in seeking me.”

There was a silence of some moments. Blanch broke it by saying, “ Then, Mr. Godolphin, you would not have sought *me*? Fortunate, as we once were, nay familiar, at Shaftesbury—at the Bath, also—you would have quitted Ragland without so much as a word of kindness—even a farewell—to your poor, your grateful prisoners and faithful friends?”

“ I had bid my Lady Arundel adieu,” replied Sidney Godolphin, his voice trembling. “ I had said farewell to Lady Cecily. I entreated her to say for me all that was respectful, gracious, kind, to one whose welfare,” he cried, agitated,

“ will ever be dear to me ; whose happiness I augur, pray for—”

“—Spare your auguries,” cried Blanch passionately. “ Mr. Godolphin, there will come a time, I trust, when girls of condition will not be bartered for and sold like lands ; their destiny fixed by deeds of parchment ; their faith plighted, ere they know the horror, the shame, of a bond without choice—love—respect !”

“ Such hath been my destiny !” She resumed—for Mr. Godolphin was struck dumb by her vehemence. “ At fourteen, I was asked, nay, almost commanded, to give my approval to a solemn contract of marriage with my—my cousin—Edward Herbert. Marriage ! how sacred to me seems that word, now ! how light and unmeaning, then ! He was my playmate—my brother I called him ; the slave of my childish sports ; my partner in the dance ; my esquire in the chace. Marriage, or a convent, is the lot of a portionless girl—the first was gay—the latter sad ; and by one act of this hand,—would I could wring it off !—I bound myself for ever !”

"And honour, duty—" returned her hearer.

"—Mr. Godolphin, talk to me not of honour, duty. I never will be his! I would not do him such wrong! What! Perjure myself at the altar, before my Creator! Give the form of vows which I detest! No, for me there is another course. The convent, rather, with the dull monastic round, and the grey-haired nuns preaching to me patience and prayer—patience to a broken heart—prayer to the restless spirit. No I cannot vow myself to Heaven. The contract would be base as that to Edward!—"

"—Then what?" asked Godolphin, slowly, timorously, yet moved by the too oft-told tale of those and earlier times, "*what* alternative?"

"You will know—you will hear," answered Blanch, her energy of speech cooling down, for she shrank into herself, and felt ashamed, when the passionate emotions of her heart, venting themselves, had been exhausted. "Speak of it no more. Holy Mary! 'tis eight o'clock that

strikes. My uncle will miss me from the dance. I shall be sent for—sought.” She turned irresolutely towards Godolphin as she spoke.

“We must, then, part,” Godolphin began; his voice faltered a little; and that tone—so slight a fuel did it require to feed the flame of the young heart that loved him—drew forth the vehemence of Blanch’s nature.

“I shall go; but think not it is to mirth, or raillery, whilst you, Mr. Godolphin, are condemned to the guard-room, or to the terrace, on your parole. Do not suppose that I can forget that, when we were prisoners, you protected and cheered us. Oh! how I wish that time were to come over again!”

“Yet go,” said Godolphin, extending his hand; “we must speak of those days no more.”

“It is easy for *you* to forget them!” replied Blanch mournfully: “to me, never. Ah! Mr. Godolphin! how unlikely it is that *we* shall ever meet again! I am ashamed—affrighted at myself,” she ex-

claimed, after a few moments. "You, whose rebellious course, whose very faith are hateful to God and man. Dangerous—irreclaimable! May God forgive me!" she added impetuously, and, breaking from Godolphin, she hastened to the postern door, thence, treading lightly and knowingly the intricate passages, she ascended to the gallery.

It was deserted; the musicians were gone; the servants were elsewhere engaged; the chandeliers were no longer illumined; and Blanch, trembling, repaired to the great hall, where she hoped to slip, unperceived, into her appointed place. It was a formidable undertaking; for the tables were already filled; the King had taken his place beneath the cloth of estate; the ewer and bowl had been presented by his chamberlain, and grace alone remained to be said. At this instant, whilst every devout Catholic in the hall crossed himself reverently, Blanch, sliding into one of those numerous passages cut out of the thickness of the wall, which are to be found in castles

and old houses, viewed the animated and glaring scene from one of those slits, which were formed by the barons of old for the purpose of inspecting and watching their retainers and dependents in the hall beneath.

And all was festivity and merriment. The doomed ones, who were to march to the siege of Bristol on the morrow, were spending their last night in joviality. Many a jest was uttered by lips which, ere the return of many days, might be pale and mute. The ante-supper—a luxurious custom introduced in the epicurean reign of James the First—was then brought in: dishes of gold and silver, as high as a tall man could well reach, being set on the table, each tempting viand being of the rarest kind; when lo! these having been once seen, and tempted the eyes of all beholders, were all taken out again, and thrown away; and a second supper was brought in, like to the previous and premonitory repast, with the exception of its being hot, and actually intended to be eaten. And this, the luxury of the day,

the crying shame of Puritans, and the introduction of the Earl of Carlisle, was solely, on this occasion, appropriated to the royal table. And never did the ante-supper again grace,—or disgrace, as it might be thought,—the hall of Ragland. There were those who then sat at table who afterwards were thankful, even in that proud castle, for a morsel of black bread, and a cup of milk. There were those in the country who looked upon the desolation of that hall as a heavy judgment for luxury, papistry, and loyalty;—three things manifestly connected—so deemed the Puritans of those days.

Blanch, secure, and afraid to enter, could but just insert the half of her face, and one eye at a time, in the narrow orifice which she commanded. Panting, and agitated by her interview with Godolphin, she would fain have retreated to a more lonely spot; but she feared the displeasure of her strict relations, and determined to remain in her hiding-place until she should be called for, or until the tumultuous party should retire to rest.

And it was some compensation to gaze upon the pleased countenance of the monarch, whom her family nearly idolized, and to watch the courtesy of his manners, the grace of his demeanour.

Her uncle, too, the marquis, was in his gayest spirits. That was a period when quibbling, or playing upon words, practical jokes, puzzles, and surprises, were the height of the fashion ; and, unless a host could present some compliment to his guest in the form of a surprise, or with the archness of a quibble, he was supposed to lack ingenuity. And now the loving cup,—that custom of great antiquity,—passed round from lip to lip—wines, then used in enormous profusion, were rejoicing the hearts of those of the dais and upper tables ; while the church-ale, brewed at Michaelmas, contented the humble ones below the salt ; and the Welshmen, as well as the Englishmen, who, according to Iago, “ drink your Dane dead drunk,” disgraced not their well-earned character on this occasion.

But, ere the feast had arrived wholly at

its close, and before young gallants had taken out their gold and silver snuff-boxes, applied their contents with much parade of their rings, and with as much skill as ladies in the artillery of the fan, in performing the modish operation of taking snuff, ere the wassail-bowl, of Xeres sack, sweetened with sugar, and Canary and Malaga, with a toast, had gone round, a fresh importation of luxuries caused the hall to ring with applause.

An aged gentleman, whom Blanch quickly discerned to be Sir Thomas Somerset, a kinsman of her uncle, the marquis, entered, bearing, on a richly-wrought silver dish, a collection of the rarest fruits that England could, at that time, even in the summer's heat, produce. Pears, grapes, figs, in all their luscious freshness, mulberries, and apricots, or, as they were then called, apricocks, so preserved as to have the semblance of ripe fruit, rose in a fragrant and beauteous pyramid.

Master Nigel Somerset, who bore his load like a porter, or a servant, next appeared, disdaining the grace of delivering

it respectfully to the King, he half flung it on the table; and, rising, without his burden, before his courteous father had done complimenting and kneeling, the gold lace and jeweled aglet-holds of his doublet, and the wrought hems of his skirt, were seen—and it was seen, also, that nothing could make him look like a gentleman of condition and education.

Blanch could remember the time when she had thrown a beaker of cold water down on Master Nigel's head from that very niche, and she half longed now to cast her fan at him, and chastise the impertinence of his being in good company; but her uncle of Worcester spoke—and all he said was wit, in his simple kinswoman's eyes—and she listened expectantly and reverentially.

"Please your majesty," said the old peer, receiving from the hands of Sir Thomas Somerset the silver dish, and offering it, kneeling, to the King—"if the four elements had been robbed to entertain your majesty, I had but done my duty;—if I had sent to Bristol for

some rarities, it had been no matter of surprise ; if I had even ventured to send to London, it had not been a wonder ;—but, I assure your majesty, this present comes from *Troy*.”

“My lord,” said the King, taking a rich apricot from the fragrant heap, “you would fain make me believe, that the sovereign of the planets hath changed the poles, and that Wales—the refuse and outcast of the garden of England, as it has been unjustly called—hath fairer fruit than England ; truly, my lord, I have heard say, that corn grows where Troy town stood ; but I never heard that apricocks grew there !”

But a graver concern attracted Blanch’s attention. Of all her relations, the only one whom Blanch feared was Edward, Earl of Glamorgan. Of a singular turn of mind, without talents for military affairs, in which he was ever signally defective ; without much discretion in his negociations, of doubtful honesty, of extreme religious opinions, this nobleman, so celebrated for his “Century of Inven-

tions," so fixed in the memory of the philosophic, by his discovery of steam as a moving principle, was a living instance of the failure of those studies which elevate a man in the college, or the closet, in fitting him for the actual business of life. A compound of philosophy and bigotry, not often to be met with—a schemer, and a fanatic—designing, yet imprudent—brave, yet indifferent to military glory—ambitious and rapacious, yet profuse, Lord Glamargon—the sport, as it seemed, of Nature in her fantastic mood,—exercised a remarkable influence, notwithstanding all his inconsistencies, on every individual to whom he deemed it worth while to bestow his attention. All things were to him a passion; at one time, the interests of the Romish Church possessed his soul; then, the politics of the day; then, the intrigues and concerns of his own family connexion: nothing was too great, nothing too small for his attention; but his exertions were ever luckless. Devoid of steadiness and integrity, no affairs prospered in his hands—his love was as de-

structive as his hatred, for it ever involved distress and dismay.

Blanch loved him not. The instinct which seems given to young minds in lieu of old experience, caused her to shrink from his preference, to tremble at his resentments; and she loved her uncle Glamorgan the less, that, to the discernment of her ripening intellect, it was manifest, how stern a control he exercised over his father, the marquis, and how singular and,—as the histories of the day attest,—how fatal an empire he held over the King's mind!

And she was startled and affrighted, when, beneath her hiding-place she heard her own name whispered by Lord Glamorgan to Pauzani; and a long, low, earnest conversation ensued; and she fancied that she could detect the word 'Godolphin,' in their discourse. But, suddenly, the conference was broken by the King's arising from his seat, and retiring from the hall to his own apartments. Then all became noise and confusion. George Wharton, who had been seated at a lower

table, started up, as the company at the orsille vacated their seats, to occupy those empty chairs, and to finish the wine. Order and even rank seemed forgotten in the tumult of the hour. Even Nigel was exalted, and elated; drinking-songs were called for: the harp of Gwylim struck up a preparatory symphony, and Blanch rushed from her hiding-place down the passage just as Wharton began to sing a favourite ditty:—

“ Fill me a bowl—a mighty bowl,
Large as my capacious soul :
Vast as my thirst is, let it have
Depth enough to be my grave ;
—I mean, the grave of all my care,
For, I design to bury 't there.”

Blanch hastened to her aunt's apartments, there to take refuge, as in a sanctuary, in the vast pile filled with such heterogeneous inhabitants, and she was relieved, as she entered the sleeping-room, to find her aunt, at any rate, if not asleep, engaged in her devotions, for all was still. And now came the dread period—dread to all who are pursuing a course unsatis-

factory to themselves—of solitude, after excitement; now the conscience challenged inquiry from memory; and the fruitless confession, the broken promise, the vow disregarded, the awe towards an avenging and supreme Ruler—for so was the young girl instructed to look upon her Maker as presenting himself to those who indulged a wish that His church sanctioned not—came with fearful and irresistible force. The dream of happiness was over; she had parted from Godolphin;—she should see him no more. And the anguish of the separation was redoubled by a sense of the guilt that had produced the suffering.

There was not a passage in Blanch's early career the virtue of which she did not question, as she lay, with all "appliances and means to boot" for rest, but with a feverishness which no comforts could assuage. And, in proportion as she became more and more persuaded of her own guilt, so more and more did she resolve to conceal it from her aunt, from her cousin Arundel, and Cecily—from all

save Edward Herbert and Pauzani. But, whatever were her resolutions with respect to Edward, they were not at that time fulfilled, for, ere day-break, the young captain of horse was under arms, and on his march towards Gloucester.

“By six o’clock, on the following morning, the Earl of Newcastle, and his royal pupil,” said Lord Arundel to Lady Cecily, as they sat together, watching the slumbers of their sick child, “will have proceeded to Bristol, where the young prince is to have an establishment of his own,—the earl giving up his charge, as governor,—and a council being formed for the prince.”

“And the King?—His Majesty?—whither goes he?”

“To Monmouth; thence to Oxford; where he purposes to set up his standard; and where—”

“Name it not!” cried Cecily, throwing herself into her husband’s arms. “I know that thou *must* go; yet, for once, I needs must play the coward. I cannot bear to think of it.”

"The hour is not come yet," said Lord Arundel, evading the theme which possessed every heart in Ragland, but which was, by common consent, exploded in friendly conversation; for there was not an able man beneath that roof, save the garrison, whose sphere of duty and of action was not, even then, appointed.

It was a relief, on such occasions, not to be able to touch upon the future, and Lord Arundel was rejoiced for once, when, just as he and Cecily were surrendering the charge to Margery, Lord Glamorgan entered the room.

"It is late, my lord," said Lord Arundel, surprised at his entrance. "Hath aught delayed the King's journey to-morrow?"

"No. His majesty goes hence; and I journey with him to Monmouth." Lord Glamorgan looked around him ere he again spoke. His was not a nature that could do anything openly; he was, like Pope, a politician even about a dish of cabbages; crooked were his ways, rather from involuntary and habitual artifice, than from the desire of doing wrong.

"Blanch Somerset goes with the Court to Oxford. It is his majesty's pleasure," he resumed, after a quick survey of the apartment.

"Blanch!" exclaimed Cecily. "Hath she my aunt's consent? And why?—how?—to whose protection?—wherefore?—"

"Consents my lord marquis to this?" asked Lord Arundel.

"It is so arranged; and, my lord, such prospects open upon the fair Blanch, such honours, such fair fortunes, that you will, I trust, obtain a willing assent from her and from her guardian, my lady aunt."

"Explain," said Lord Arundel, gravely. "What schemes hast thou for Blanch? Thou dost not forget that she is betrothed?"

"No; but marriages must wait, in these days. Blanch will attend upon the Princess Elizabeth."

"—Your son's future bride?" said Lord Arundel, alluding to a report which prevailed, that stipulations had secretly passed between the King and Lord Glamor-

gan, for the union of his son with Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Charles.

“My lord, you honour me greatly. Nay, I believe our family may be already said to have achieved its greatness by—”

“—Not by policy and craft,” returned Lord Arundel, with a slight dash of contempt on his countenance, “not by misusing the King’s goodness, and making terms with his distress, but by honest, approved loyalty, hearty good will, and risk of all, save conscience, for the one good cause.”

“You are eloquent, my lord,” returned Lord Glamorgan, with a look of contempt so haughty that Cecily hastened to interpose her accustomed office—the best of all offices—that of a peacemaker.

“Since the King wills it, Blanch must needs go,” she said, gently, and looking at her husband; “but my aunt Arundel will take care to possess our royal master’s mind with certain facts touching Blanch; that her troth is plighted, yet her affections not so certain, as quick; that she

is fair, imprudent, and young—three qualities which suit not well with a Court.”

“I dread, too, lest she be made a tool of party, a bait for the wavering; her beauty, her vivacity, her condition and kindred, will give to the poor child, there, an importance which she hath not here,” said Lord Arundel.

“Yet,” added Cecily, “let her, ere ever the indissoluble tie be made, see mankind, and so learn to estimate the virtues of her betrothed, the good and gallant Edward Herbert.”

“Well spoken, madam! And now,” said Lord Glamorgan, “teach me how to present these arguments before my aunt’s judgment. For the present, I will retire, leaving you and my lord to disclose to my niece, Blanch, the commands of our sovereign.”

He arose, and long and earnest were the consultations which Lord Arundel and his lady held ere they could come to a resolution how to unfold to Lady Arundel the separation which must of necessity take place. But that crafty

designs were seriously entertained by the Earl of Glamorgan in thus removing from the care of her relatives, the young Blanch, was a notion which, whilst it could not but obtrude itself into the mind of Lord Arundel, was not entertained either by himself or Lady Cecily. At all events, it was a comfort to their confiding spirits to learn that Father Pauzani—he who would watch over the spiritual welfare of the inexperienced creature was to accompany the King, in order to join her majesty, Henrietta Maria, at Oxford.

CHAPTER XIII

Methinks, a woman of this valiant spirit
Should, if a coward heard her speak these words,
Infuse his breast with magnanimity.

Henry VI.

“HERE,” said King Charles to Lord Glamorgan, as they rode together in the centre of a strong body of horse, on the ensuing day, towards Troy House, “I, at any rate, feel secure: for once,” and the King smiled, “have I nought but friends around me. Peaceful, fair scenes! shall I ever visit you again?”

“Your majesty’s spirits are heavy, to-day,” said Glamorgan, seeing the King turn round, ere the party had ridden to the extremity of the vast domain of Ragland, and fix his eyes upon the grim towers, seen now dimly through the grey

morning mist; "and yet the royal cause is like to prosper."

"Ah! Glamorgan," observed the King, as he turned away from a long and silent contemplation of the battlements, beneath which the hunted monarch had, for the last time, enjoyed the semblance of home, "let us not be too confident; let us, rather, carry a watchful eye to dangers till they come to ripeness, then let loose a speedy hand. He that expects them too long, meets them too late; he that meets them too soon, gives the evil an advantage."

"—And 'tis as well,—as your majesty's faithful servant, my father, is wont to say," returned the earl, who always fell in with the humour of his sovereign,—“to commit the beginning of our enterprises to Argus' eyes, their ends to Briareus' hands, and we are then safe. But, lo! the gates of Troy!”

"No Helen here," said Charles, smiling. "And have we quite lost sight of Ragland? No; there is just a fane on the Yellow Tower to be discerned. Ah!

I picture to myself your father, Glamorgan, standing, his white head all uncovered,—though I prayed him, in the morning's breeze, to don his cap,—proffering his duty, and swearing by the Holy Mother to let Ragland be dismantled and ruined ere he would suffer the towers which had sheltered the person of his king to fall into the hands of our enemies. I would fain have seen the farewell between the lord marquis and his fair niece, but that I feared to embarrass their last parting."

"O, my liege, Mistress Blanch is right happy to go. Your majesty will find her to be no indifferent hand at such arts as will divert the Princess during our long winter nights. She plays passably on the lute, sings merrily, dances like Herodias' daughter, and hath a knowledge of many cunning devices of needle-work."

"But we must compass her bridal with young Herbert," said the King, "since, as thou tellest me, both wish it passionately, and 'tis nought but the scruples and formalities of the Lady Arundel that forbids their pre-contract being fulfilled."

“Even so; and my father will be mightily indebted to your majesty to prosper, — nay, to command their union,” replied Lord Glamorgan, as now, having ascended the gentle eminence whereon Troy stands, they perceived Sir Thomas Somerset, his wife, his daughter, his son, — the hopeful Nigel — and a retinue of servants and tenants, standing in the court before the house to receive them.

It was not the stately building which now imparts such a notion of the former grandeur of the Somersets, when, after leaving the princely towers of Ragland, you ride by the manorial residence which was usually appropriated to their younger sons. Old Troy, rendered famous by its gardens, was afterwards pulled down by Henry, the first Duke of Beaufort, — a stern Royalist, and adherent of the second James, — and the present house was, by the same nobleman, erected in its stead.

The King merely stopped at Troy to drink a stirrup-cup, and to eulogize the fair place; to ask what fish swam in the

river Trothy, which the cavalcade had just forded, and to commend young Nigel to certain exercises at arms, in the prospect—the King spoke hesitatingly—of a troop hereafter. And Nigel was constrained to receive three pinches, and even a slight assault upon the curled locks, which were libelous representations of love-locks, ere he rushed forward, as if about to plunge into a battle, and to make what seemed to be meant for a bow.

“A rare Plantagenet,” said George Wharton, who rode beside Blanch Somerset, who, on her jennet, with several ladies her kindred, that were for sundry reasons taking advantage of the King’s convoy to Oxford, was looking back towards Ragland.

“You are ill at ease, Mistress Blanch,” pursued the Cavalier, riding more closely up to her side. “’Tis with your full, free consent that you are taken into the scenes of cabal, and yet of courtly merriment, I trust?”

“O yes, Sir George Wharton,” answered

Blanch, bowing graciously, and smiling upon the gallant Royalist. "It is my chief wish to be the devoted servant of the young Princess; but I leave kindred from whom I have never before been parted. My aunt Arundel grieved sorely—there! now we have turned down this road I cannot catch one glimpse of Ragland."

"You will be mighty content in the court, madam. The Queen meets her royal consort at Abingdon, and now, after twice being in the hands of the Parliamentarians, Oxford is securely ours. There will be balls, feastings, masques; and, when we have cut the Roundheads fairly to pieces, lively rejoicings, doubtless."

"Where?" asked Blanch, "and how soon do ye expect to encounter the Rebels?"

"Discoursing on such matters maketh a young cheek pale. The campaign in the west is the heat of the contest; but fear not, Captain Herbert's troop is quartered, I learn, in Oxford."

"You exceed the bounds of courtesy

in such allusions," answered Blanch, turning her head away from Wharton, and with a haughtiness of manner which was totally new in her deportment.

"I am like my Royal Master," said the persevering Cavalier, after a silence of some duration, "I do not love those who are never angry."

"That doth not give you any right to affect those in whom anger,—indeed disdain—is lovely," whispered Lord Lindsay, aware of the forwardness, and absence of delicacy, which George Wharton, like many men, brought suddenly from an obscure station to the intercourse of persons of rank, involuntarily display,—Lord Lindsay so highly accomplished and so well bred, that the refinement of a woman's deportment was combined with the energy of a man's character, saw this predominant and vital defect in his friend, and wished to guard Blanch from annoyance. His calm and well-timed check succeeded, and Blanch, until the cavalcade arrived at the town of Monmouth, was left to her own reflections.

A very brief space of time was allotted for refreshment at Monmouth, for the King was desirous of reaching Gloucester before night; and, after a secure journey, the spire of the cathedral of Gloucester was beheld in the frosty air of a cool moonlight by the Royalist party, and not without some surprise at their safety, and good fortune.

"Since we have left the marches of Wales," observed the monarch to his faithful Stuart, "I am impatient—I pine—I pant to reach Abingdon."

The Duke of Richmond smiled. "A true-love still, although long-a-wedded, I see, sire," was the cool answer of one who knew no tenderer passion than a devoted fidelity to his royal kinsman.

"The Queen sends me tidings," replied Charles, as he rode, in the stillness of evening, all around him silence;—"that she hath never experienced better health than since she hath discarded all feminine weakness, in her march from York to Pomfret. 'Tis wonderful, to what our human efforts will extend upon the pressure of circumstances."

“The common soldiers,” said Lindesay, “love their female general.”

“She hath treated them with that freedom that Englishmen love,” answered the King, “and, despite the sneers of our enemy, who hath called her forces the Papist’s army,—”

“And her majesty’s field-pieces from Holland, (the Queen’s gods,) please your majesty,” responded Lord Glamorgan—

“Her army hath increased,” pursued the King. “Ah! Heaven surely favours our efforts.—’Tis a great felicity, James,” whispered Charles to his chamberlain, “to know that she hath done all for *me*.”

A dull “ah! ah!”—a sound of reluctant consent, peculiar to the Scotch, and perfectly unattainable to any but to those of Gaelic origin, was the reply to the sanguine king’s observation.

“Pshaw!” said Sir George Wharton aside to Lord Lindesay,—“Our sovereign is deceived by the manœuvring daughter of the hateful Medici. She careth for no one save her son. It is *his* crown for which she fights.”

"Yet she fights well," remarked Lord Lindesay: "at all events, she hath kept up the spirits of the army; although her majesty is wont to laugh at her luckless exploits, and to affirm that she hath taken but one town, and that poorly defended—Burton-upon-Trent."

"What I love not," replied Sir George Wharton, "is, that she ever maketh herself the King's equal in power, as in rank or state."

"She loves him not," returned Lord Lindesay, in the same confidential tone. "No! She loves dominion; she hath an appetite for vengeance. But one of the meanest confessors is of more value in her sight than the King's grace. And, when these turmoils be quieted, and Englishmen review this dreary epoch, on Henrietta's head will much of the censure of this dire contest be—if men tell *truth*,—inflicted."

"As how?" inquired Wharton. "Although I affect not her majesty, I censure her not so freely."

"Was she not," said Lord Lindesay, mournfully, "the cause of noble Straford's death? Was not his majesty, by her persuasions, instigated to the unhappy measure of asking for the impeached members of the House of Commons?"

"Pshaw!—a loose statement of my Lady Carlisle's to the rebel Pym—and, remember, my lord, she hath not a person near her capable of telling her majesty the real condition of the country."

"But the words, '*Allez, poltron!*' were," replied Lord Lindesay, "heard by Lady Carlisle,—followed by this daring counsel: 'Pull the rogues out by the ears, or never see me more!' This, in the Countess of Carlisle's chamber; she, listening at the door. What the end was of that fatal step, thou knowest?"

As they thus parleyed, the gates of Gloucester were opened to the watchword, and, ere the midnight hour had struck, the King was safely lodged in the governor's house; the officers were billeted in the town, whilst Blanch, in company with her kinswomen, was de-

posited at the residence of one of the canons of the cathedral.

The progress of the King's person through Wales had had the air of a triumph: the mountaineer peasantry crowded to his standard; wherever he marched the utmost demonstrations of loyalty were expressed; but now the scene was changed. The troubled and devastated county of Gloucester was ravaged by flying companies of horse, skirmishing over the country; and it was only by furtive marches and circuitous routes, that the King could proceed. Yet such was his impatience to meet, after an absence of some months, the too idolized wife by whom he was, in all, save one respect, entirely governed, that his body-guard, increasing almost incredibly, as it went along, by supplies of volunteer troops, entered Abingdon on the third night after quitting Ragland.

Bells ringing, bonfires burning, and the acclamations of assembled townspeople denoted the loyalty of the borough of Abingdon; but, whilst bowing

graciously, yet with an air of abstraction, to the people, Charles hurried on, scarcely permitting his attendants time for the necessary refreshment; for the Queen, who had appointed a meeting at Abingdon, was not arrived; and the impatience of her royal consort, and his solicitude concerning her safety, could not be concealed.

The King was on the point of pursuing his route to Oxford, when a salute from the garrison, and the renewed acclamations of the people, announced the Queen's arrival.

"Her majesty," said Sir George Wharton to Blanch, who was posted at a window of one of the principal houses of Abingdon, in which the ladies of the royal suite were entertained, "rides, as commander, at the head of a regiment of dragoons, which she has raised herself, and followed by three thousand infantry."

"See! and is *that*," exclaimed Blanch, leaning out of the window as far as she could, — "that little creature all

awry, with that thin, wasted face, the Queen?"

"She is, indeed," replied George Wharton, "wofully changed;" he gazed in silence and compassion upon the once beauteous Henrietta, worn, and prematurely old, with toil and care. She rode in a careless riding suit, over which was thrown a furred mantle, bespattered with mud, and faded and worn as the wearer. Her palfrey was begrimed with the white clay of Oxfordshire,—for the Queen had ridden far that day,—and its bands and trappings, tarnished, and even rent, manifested that growing disregard to appearances which creeps upon the unhappy and ill prospering. Her fair skin, once so matchless in its purity, had no longer the delicate carnation hue which had set off the dark, sometimes sleepy, sometimes flashing eyes: the fine turn of her features, the rich colour of her hair, remained unimpaired; but the mouth, that index to the temper, ever the least pleasing feature in the countenance of Henrietta Maria, looked too

large, from the emaciated cheeks, for the rest of her features, and even her hair, no longer arranged by her majesty's foreign *coiffeur*, hung in disorderly tresses over the face, so perfectly formed that even the pencil of Vandycke could add little to its real symmetry.

"Her eyes are filled with tears—I saw them on her cheek. O how one's dreams deceive one!"

"Yet, what an intellect beams forth in those dark eyes!" said Puzani, who seldom left Blanch Somerset, but acted as her familiar spirit. "She hath encountered much trouble and dismay; her majesty was ever accounted more forward than stout."

"—She alights! she is in the King's arms! He has led her away into the fort," cried Blanch, interrupting the Father. "She must be happy—for she is with him whom she best loves!" Blanch, as she spoke, sank down into a seat, and covered her eyes with her hands. Happily for her, all the company with whom she came were attracted by new arrivals;

and Blanch remained musing on the past, until summoned to follow in the Queen's suite to Oxford.

It was a proud day for that ancient and noble city. A brief space only was permitted to the King and Queen for conversation and refreshment; for they were to play the principal part in the gay pageant. By noon, the Queen, with the bright flush of excitement on her cheek, was duly conveyed in her state coach; the King rode by her side on a fine horse of a deep cream colour, and, as they rode through the streets of Abingdon, beside, behind, around them were the great officers of state; a gallant assemblage of horse, now swelled to an army, was dispersed in bodies to prevent — although of that there were little danger in so loyal a region — surprise or ambush.

The ladies who were summoned by command as the future attendants of the Queen and princess—for the court was now to be maintained with such splendour as it could at Oxford—formed a

little company, guarded by officers of the household troops; and Blanch again found herself attended by Sir George Wharton, who instructed her in all the ceremonials, and likewise gave her a list of those who composed the *dramatis personæ* of the piece, for the day.

"See!" he exclaimed, as the Queen's coach passed the barriers, "her majesty is joined by his highness Prince Rupert. The Earl of Dorset, the Queen's chamberlain, rides on t'other side. Ha!" and Sir George Wharton touched his helmet as he spoke. "Your kinsman, Mistress Blanch, Captain Herbert."

Blanch waved her hand to her kinsman, and the courtesy was respectfully returned, as the young officer, planted by the road side, sat gracefully on his charger, to guard the King's highway.

"'Tis pleasant," said the gay Wharton, recklessly, "to see one's relatives and sweethearts,—I crave mercy!—no frowns, goddess of beauty! queen of hearts! the toast of the dragoon guards! the transplanted flower! the—"

“ — Colonel Wharton,” said Lord Lindesay, coming up at this instant, “ a message from his majesty—to the right, there—I will guard the lady.”

“ — And this,” said the accomplished nobleman, following, for an instant, the disconcerted knight with a shrewd glance, “ this — those towers and spires which rise before you,—is Oxford. You have, perchance, felt some interest in the seat of learning !”

“ I have—I did once. Which, my Lord, is the College of All Souls ?”

“ It is seated to the eastern side of the street, through which we shall pass ; but you mistake, Captain Herbert was at the Christ-church.”

“ He may have been at the world’s end for aught I know,” replied Blanch, blushing, and somewhat impatiently.

“ Possibly ! Women are incomprehensible,” thought Lord Lindesay. “ Already have most of the academicians exchanged the gown for the military—thus, as you say, ’tis of little import whence a man issues a scholar. Their square caps

are turned into helmets, their schools are converted into magazines; but hist! there are the Bowmen volunteers drawn in array!—Youths—all of whom have suffered great hardships since they lost the protection of the goddess Minerva; but acquired great fame since she hath assumed the character of Pallas. You see I speak as becometh an Oxonian, Mistress Somerset.”

Lord Lindesay paused; for, at this instant, their scarlet robes enlivening the landscape, and preceded by three Esquires Bedell, whose silver maces gleamed in the sun, appeared the grave authorities of Oxford. They rode on horseback, their steeds covered with long footcloths; and the Vice-Chancellor, Doctors, and Masters of Colleges, descending, and kneeling on the road, spoke an oration, which, by those who had dined, was reported to be of some twenty minutes' duration—to those who had not dined, it was vehemently alleged to have lasted an hour. Then were the staves of the Bedells given to the King, who courteously restored

them, and the Vice-Chancellor, and other dignitaries, falling back into their places, the procession went on its way.

As they went, the musical bells of Christ-church set up their famous peal, and all the minor churches responded. Cannon were fired, and a chorus of cheers and shouts from gownsmen and townsmen filled up the intervals. The corporation, not without arms,—for many and stern were the encounters, in those days, between the civil authorities and the under-graduates,—came forth to meet the King, offered their maces, and received them with a smile, and a short gracious speech—the more gracious, that shouts of laughter from the young Oxonians greeted the worthy gentlemen, and then restored them to the worshipful Mayor of Oxford, who, with Garter King at Arms, on his right hand, Heralds, with embroidered coats, and the Aldermen, in scarlet robes, followed the King into the town of Oxford.

“Never will there be such a sight as this, perhaps, again beheld!” was the too

just observation of Pauzani, as he followed, being placed among the Queen's household. Preceded by a guard of honour the Queen's coach rolled heavily on over the long series 'of bridges which cross the united arms of the Thames and Isis. The King, riding near her, surrounded by his chief officers of state, was followed by Lord Lindesay heading the King's guards, augmented by an incredible number of fresh retainers, armed and accoutred by the country gentlemen (whose power was never more strikingly exemplified than during the Rebellion), and closed by the city Trained-bands, which the regular soldiery no longer despised, and by county Militias, called, like the Landwehr of feudal Germany, from their peaceful homes to scenes of tumult; followed by the Heralds in their embroidered coats—whilst Garter King at Arms, rode with the Mayor of Oxford, before the Corporation.

As the grand procession entered gallantly that town which had been strongly fortified by the King, a singular scene was

presented. The scholars, as they were then indiscriminately called, of the different colleges, ranged on either side of the street, in military jerkins, and armed at all points—boys in age, men in valour,—proffered, through their captain, their duty and service to their sovereign. Never, perhaps, did that famed and beautiful city—itsself a picture—witness a spectacle more interesting. There, among the troops, on their fine coursers, sat the parents, in many instances, of the young combatants, and many an eye glistened with delight as the young student, somewhat awkward, but not unseemly, in his new garb, was hastily recognised, some amongst the famous Oxford Horse, paid by the colleges, others among a gallant band of Infantry, comprising all the denizens of the University, Masters,—Bachelors, and Undergraduates, between—a comprehensive period—the ages of sixteen, and sixty. The King made a short reply in Latin:—then, ere he proceeded, he turned to his chief attendants, and pointed to the fortifications—

“Those outworks,” remarked Charles, skilled, like all the Stuarts, in the art of complimenting gracefully, “were planned by a young mathematician of Queen’s College.” His eye glanced, as he spoke, upon a certain troop of young Bowmen volunteers, who afterwards did great service, and then a shout arose, of such joyousness, proffered with such hearty good will, that even the calm features of James Stuart were moved, and a smile, tempered by official propriety, gleamed on that stern countenance. “Even the scholars,” observed Charles, “warmed with an unwonted enthusiasm, worked in the trenches; there is not one who hath not been trained to arms. We have not only all the learning of the country assembled here, but all the gallantry and beauty, too,” he added, looking from side to side, where, ranged in the windows, or seated on temporary stages, the wives and daughters of the nobility and gentry hailed the monarch and his followers with rapture. But, in an instant, all was still; the shouts of the populace were peremptorily

hushed by the Serjeants at Arms, the voices of the ladies were gradually subdued to whispers; the clanging bells died away on the ear—the salutes from the fortress subsided. Motionless stood the horses; and, at length, the vociferous yellings—for I cannot use a politer term—of the Oxonian scholars, were, with much difficulty, and after sundry rebellious renewings, silenced. The military might have interfered in vain, the Serjeants at Arms expostulated, the King, perchance, have looked rebukingly, unheeded; but the Vice-Chancellors, and the Heads of Houses came forth in all the radiance of their scarlet robes, and the scholars stood abashed before a hierarchy, to them far more awful than any sovereign;—the monarchs of that region, the cynosures of every undergraduate's eye—the dictators, tribunes; and, if we enumerate the proc-tors, the lictors of Oxford, endowed with a solemn, an awful, influence, over the unruly wills of their subjects.

A long and loyal address from these dignitaries, inaudible, of course, prefaced the

entrance of the King into the cathedral. There sinking on his knees, near to the door, his hands upraised, his eyes uplifted, Charles forgot, for many moments, the applause and incense of men. He was no longer a King, but a mortal before the King of Kings!

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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RAGLAND CASTLE.

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RAGLAND CASTLE:

A TALE

OF THE GREAT REBELLION.

BY MRS. THOMSON,

AUTHOR OF

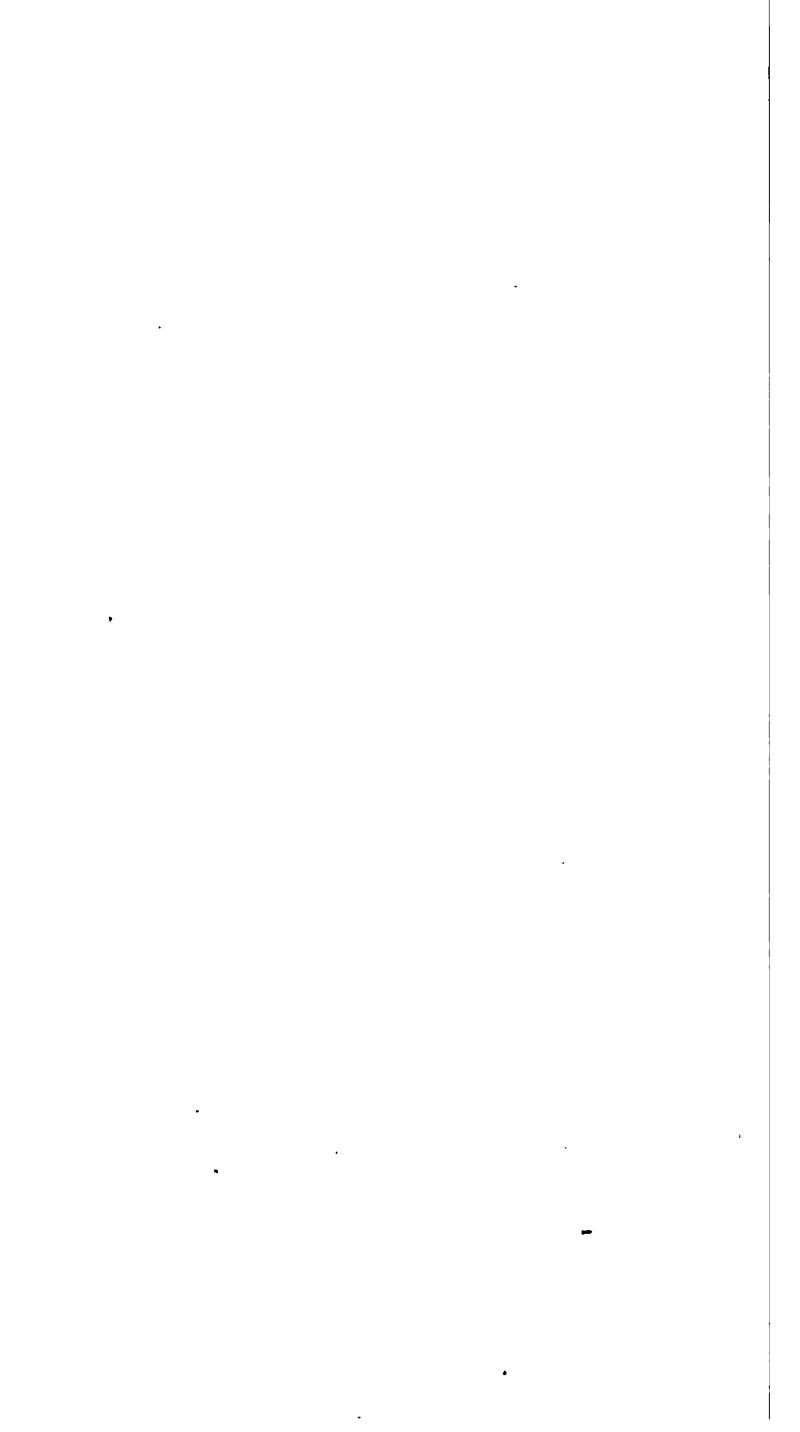
**"WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS;" "ANNE
BOLEYN," ETC.**

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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RAGLAND CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

Carlisle ! a name which all our woods are taught,
Loud as their Amaryllis to resounde ;
Carlisle ! a name which on the bark is wrought
Of every tree that's worthy of the wounde ;—
From Phœbus' rays, our shadows and our streames
May guard us better than from Carlisle's beames.

EDMUND WALLER.

THE gardens of Merton College became, during the residence of the Queen in Oxford, the resort of her attendants ; and many a new and strange scene was witnessed by the walls of that quaint enclosure.

One evening, the grassy walks, then protected from the wintry blasts by hedges of yew, were paced by two persons, who, perhaps for the first time, discoursed on themes of tender interest, in that region of conventual recollections. Doubtless, it may have echoed with the verses of Ovid and of Horace ; perchance, it may have witness-

ed the perplexing meditations of some old Fellow of Merton, who, in his fiftieth year, began to think that life closed with more dignity in a village parsonage, with a house to oneself, glebe lands, tithe-barns, geese, poultry, and a wife, than in the learned ease of Walter de Merton's endowments. Perhaps,—to recur to antiquity,—those fair alleys might, centuries ago, have been paced by the slow and melancholy step of one, who, in monastic days, had vowed himself to celibacy, in the bitterness of sorrows and disappointments long since hushed in the grave. Imagination can fairly picture such an one—not aged, yet not young, with shorn head, and worn countenance,—pacing to and fro, “cooling the air with his sighs,” whilom the stars, set in deep jasper, rose over tower and spire, and the nocturnal mass chanted, (until heresy had still-ed such holy concerts,) upon the top of Magdalen tower, was sung for the eternal repose of Henry the Seventh—a monarch who did more for his soul after death, and less for its benefit during life—for rapacity hath its especial mark set upon it by Scripture,—than most of those who dauntless died—and trembling died.

The Norman-arched windows of the Tower of Merton were faint and dim;—even its light and beautiful battlements were confused in the coming gloom of evening, though still a strong, firm outline was discerned; the rich machicolations beneath the battlements were all lost to view;—nay, bells were ringing to prayers, for it was six o'clock,—as Edward Herbert surprised Blanch within the enclosure,—once, in monastic times, the sole scene of recreation to those whom Walter de Merton transplanted from Surrey, and there established.

But little recked Blanch and her affianced bridegroom of bishops or monks, or even—with reverence be it spoken—of doctors, proctors, or heads of colleges. He, upon the plea of kindred, had snatched from the authorities of the Queen's household permission to see his cousin; and he seemed little disposed to lose the opportunity of converse thus afforded.

"One word—only one word, Blanch," exclaimed the young lover, following her rapid footsteps quickly, "as the greatest boon—as the mightiest favour I claim it; ah! if thou deny it, and I should be carried off by a random shot as I watch at the Holy Bush to-

night, or if I should be sent to Reading, or Basing, on such perilous duty, Blanch, as would make thy blood run cold to hear —”

“ — With respect to that,” returned Blanch, “ I am not of a timorous nature. Touching the letter which thou makest a pretence of seeing, there it is! As to thy being ordered on duty, have they not soldiers enough to man the ramparts, that know somewhat more than the practice of the artillery-garden, but they must needs take youths — saving thy presence — Master Herbert? Besides, thou hast been threatening me with the phantom ‘ violent death ’ ever since thy imagination coveted a musket and a pike !”

She spoke thus lightly ; but, in an instant, added more gravely, “ And so thou marvest to find me *here* ? Thou canst not, Edward, be more surprised than I am to find myself at Oxford. It was my uncle Glamorgan’s doing : a sore contest was there between the marquis and him ; but my uncle, Glamorgan, prevailed, as thou knowest he is wont ; and the argument that went most to gain my aunt’s consent was, that the Lady Elizabeth would else have none but heretics to attend her.”

“Nor—nor whilst her governess, the Countess of Leicester, lives, will the Princess have any other, methinks,” replied Herbert.

“I know not how that is to be; but my Lord Glamorgan—oh! how scantily give I him the name of uncle, for I love him not!—holds a strict friendship with the Lady Carlisle, the Countess of Leicester’s sister, to whom he hath commended me.”

“Lady Carlisle! Fear her!—shun her!—confide not in her!” cried Edward impetuously; “the fairest, the falsest of dissemblers! Hath she not played a deep and dangerous game between the Queen and the parliament’s men? Was it not she who betrayed to the house the Queen’s triumphant exclamation, when the members were called for? Was it not she who?—but I forget; such parleying is not safe here. All I would say,” added Herbert, lowering his tone, “is, beware of any counsellors save your own good heart! Above all, beware of fine ladies who fish in troubled waters! for, depend on this, the woman who meddles with dice or politics was never yet virtuous!”

“Edward!” exclaimed Blanch, in a

tone of astonishment and displeasure. "This freedom in thy talk to me?"

"Pardon me! I spoke in the heat of the moment. The time may come,—for of this we may be certain, the contest will not last long,—when, safe and settled, I may and will claim the contract so cruelly and needlessly delayed,—when I shall be lawfully your guardian and protector. Yes! it will not be long. Rebellion must and will be extirpated, and a signal justice"——

"Stop!" cried Blanch, seizing the hand which was extended in the heat of argument, and grasping it for an instant; she would have said more, but her courage died away, and she stood still, gasping and confused.

"Was it to chide me," asked Edward, gently, "that you bade me pause?"

"And will they who have joined hand to hand in their revolt, and have fought on the Parliament's side, be extirpated also? What, in short, will become of *them*? Tell me at once! do not keep me in suspense!" cried Blanch, with breathless haste. "Tell me at once what will be the end of all this! Tell me the worst, and let me bear it as I may!"

Her betrothed turned an anxious gaze

of amazement upon Blanch as she spoke. The shades of evening were gathering around them, but a gleam from the chapel of St. John, which fell athwart the grass-walk, showed to him a face of agony ; and a sudden suspicion passed across his mind.

“ Our King is merciful,” he said, somewhat abruptly. “ He will not do unto his enemies as they who revile him have already done unto brave Capel. Those who are not killed in battle may, perchance, escape death ; but banishment for ever—worse, as I should think, than death,—will be their portion. Why ask you ?”

“ Because,” cried Blanch, a momentary impulse giving her courage, “ my heart is in that cause ; my conscience here. Edward, forgive me ! I am a wretch—a very wretch ; false to you, and to all. Yet, hear me ! before you turn from me, and strike your brow in passion, and—nay, let me defend myself ; I have much to excuse me, much to be pitied for, rather than blamed,” she added, weeping.

“ Am I dreaming ? Can it be you, Blanch, who speak thus ? Reflect on the dishonour—the disgrace. If you think not of me, think of yourself ! We cannot go back ; there is a tie which

can be severed only by death. My death may release you ; and, if what you say be true, I shall not shun it. Who is the villain that hath tried—for he cannot, he shall not do it—to lure you from your duty ? ”

“ He is no villain,” replied Blanch, humbly, “ and he hath never tried so unworthily—no ! think what you will ! I should not have loved him if he had ! ” She spoke in that deep abasement of spirit which a consciousness of weakness and error produces ; and Edward’s generous feelings were touched by her manner.

“ Tell me more ! ” he said kindly and gently ; “ I will try to bear it ; and trust to time to cure such wanderings of your affection.”

“ Time will do no good,” said Blanch sorrowfully. “ Have I not tried time ? Is it not now four months since we parted ? Have I not followed such penance as the holy Father imposed ? Have I not striven—prayed—vowed ? Yet all in vain ! Give me back my contract, Edward ! I cannot marry him ; but I will die ere I become your wife. I cannot marry him ! No, no ! God hath set his ban upon such an union ; but I will love him. The heart is free—the thoughts are free.”

“ This is a direful blow to me ! ” ex-

claimed Herbert, after a deep silence of some moments. "Accursed be those customs which link hand to hand, but cannot bind the affections!"

"Ah! thou speakest my thoughts! How often have I rued the day, when, scarce fifteen,—it was no fault of mine, Edward,—they coupled us together! I would fain have hidden myself that day; and, had I known what a hereafter was to follow that one fatal step, should I ever have been so blind, so mad?"

"Tell me!" cried Edward Herbert, "the name of my secret enemy, that, should I meet him face to face when I may in fairness revenge my wrongs—And yet of what avail?" he added mournfully, his voice dropping almost to a whisper, and his mien and figure assuming the attitude of deep despair. "And how," he added a few moments afterwards, "am I to free thee from thy vow to me?"

"Ask Father Panzani," replied Blanch tremulously, "he told me there might be a dispensation; he said,—"

"And is the cold-blooded Jesuit to dictate to me?" exclaimed Herbert indignantly, "—he to contrive and settle my misfortune after his own artful fashion? Yet no matter! thou wilt it."

Herbert stood for a moment or two in thought,—in a paroxysm of thought, as it may be called—then he added hurriedly, “I can promise nothing,—I will consent to nothing. Thou lovest another.—I—I, who have cherished this one hope for years!” he exclaimed, striking his clenched hand against his forehead,—“am doomed to misery!” He rushed from her as he spoke, and, ere Blanch could reply—and her reply might have soothed him, for the strong passion of the youth had roused her from that selfish apathy to the feelings of others, which all-engrossing love produces,—he was gone.

Blanch sat down on a step, and mused, even whilst the notes of the tabor and lute above announced that there was dancing in the Queen’s chambers—even whilst the chilly night drew on, cheered in the streets of Oxford by innumerable flambeaux, which were carried about by the townspeople and students. But an attendant came to seek her, and, scarcely knowing what she did, or where she went, Blanch walked after the messenger to her chamber.

The Queen, as was the custom in royal visits to Oxford, resided in regal splendour at Merton College; the King

held his court at Christ-church ; and the hall of Christ-church was decorated and prepared this night for a masque.

Bewildered, dazzled, dreaming, as it were, her sight and fancy struck by the gorgeous splendour of the scene into which she was hurried, her memory running over the scene which she had quitted, Blanch, with several other young ladies of condition, was hurried first into a small presence-chamber, where, under a cloth of state, with her children beside her, and talking volubly, — sometimes French, sometimes English,—she found herself, ere she could in any degree collect her ideas, kneeling to kiss the small white hand of the Queen, — the unfortunate Henrietta Maria.

As Blanch, retiring, looked up, her restless gaze was riveted by the charm of a countenance which then had all the aid of dress to embellish its early fading beauties, and which still, in spite of the assertion of the Queen, that no woman could be lovely after two-and-twenty, boasted of surpassing loveliness.

The smile, the air, the grace, the intelligence, and vivacity of those charming eyes might well account for the passionate affection cherished for her by her

still enamoured husband ; whose love for the partner of his youth, and of his prosperous days, is said to have been “ a composition of love, and generosity, and gratitude.”

A delicacy of appearance,—the delicacy of ill health,—softened, too, at this period the quickness of manner, and concealed the sharp temper, which would not be restrained in the full exuberance of spirits, and when, in the proud, early days of conscious power, Buckingham’s death gave to the wife her place in the ascendant.

The clear pale cheek was contrasted by slender dark ringlets ; whilst ear-drops of pearl fell upon a neck scarcely less white than the costly baubles ; a dress of white satin, full and flowing, save at the boddice, across which a long chain of white pearls was doubled, and a deep fall of lace over each arm, concealed, with foreign skill, the well-known defects of the Queen’s small, and now wasted, figure. Married at sixteen, there was on the form—even on the lovely and varying face, even on that alabaster brow—the look of premature care and decline ; that air of anxiety, which a too early marriage generally produces on the young,—too young to bear the mother’s cares,—

in Henrietta's case,—without a mother's joys.

"You tremble," said a lisping voice to Blanch, as she withdrew to one side of the room, and stood gazing at the Queen, almost unconscious that the high-born and haughty leaders of the Court were near her, and around her. "There is nought to tremble at! The Queen is all goodness, all graciousness,—when her majesty happens to be pleased," she concluded, whispering in a low tone to a gentleman who stood behind her. "Dost thou, fair incognito, move in the pageant to-night? —'Twill not be worth gazing at; Jermyn is not here, nor Sir Endymion Porter, nor my latest love, Captain Herbert," pursued the lady, again turning to her friend; but speaking and looking around her with a saucy air, as much as to say, "I lead here to wisdom, or folly, just as I please."

"Is that," said Blanch, timidly,—for the young spoiled creature was no longer, as she soon found, to her sorrow, amongst her fond, caressing relatives at Ragland—"is that, pr'ythee tell me,—my—*the* Princess?"

"Yes! a fair child, is she not? but low in stature, like her mother. Lovely creature! Pretty, charming poppet!—angel! your highness is divine to-night!" ex-

claimed the unknown lady aloud, as the little Princess, obeying a quick command of her impetuous mother, came at this moment to pay her respects to the lady. "A charming visage!" and the flatterer bent her face down to the lowly stature of a child of about eleven years of age, endowed not so much with beauty as with the attributes that interest the mind; a soft, pensive, hazel eye; regular but set features; a physiognomy old for her years, a pale, sad-looking complexion, as if the gentle girl had known the miseries of a too exact discipline, or had shared the sorrows of her parents, whilst the heart was unformed, the judgment weak; as if the slender frame had suffered from the daily excitement of the too early ripened intellect; and the manners, as well as the dress, of the ill-fated Elizabeth, corresponded with this expression, in which there was the immature character of childhood, without its buoyancy.

"Old-fashioned little creature!" exclaimed the lady, to whom the Princess had sedately curtsied, as the child, leading an infant brother by the hand, returned to her mother's side, there to give to the admiring Court a picture of domestic affection. Alas! the heart was wanting.

"She cares not for them," was the lady's observation. "She loves but one! and for him she would sacrifice all; and him, her first-born, she doateth on! But see! her majesty goes forth—how she limps! and how greatly her dignity suffers now she descends from that step they have raised to elevate her! Hark! music! Let us hasten."

"Thinkest thou that she is fair?" asked Lord Lindesay, who stood near to Blanch.

"Who?—the lady who is gone this instant?—what is her name?—who is she?" answered Blanch quickly.

"Look again, and guess! There is but one, who, with those features so—ordinary I could almost call them—that figure, which Time—for she hath long since passed her fortieth year—points to as one of his conquests over comeliness, hath yet acquired so great a fame for beauty. Nor is there," added the same speaker, "in this realm, one who could have changed, betrayed,—betrayed and changed, and yet—can be trusted still!"

"Ah, then I guess!" cried Blanch unguardedly, "Godolphin hath told me as much:" she checked herself—"often have I heard of the Countess of Carlisle. Take me hence, that I may gaze on her again."

CHAPTER II.

Sometimes we see a cloud that 's dragonish,
A vapour, sometime, like a bear or lion;
A tower'd citadel, a pendant rock,
A fortified mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon 't, that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air. Thou hast seen these signs:
They are *Black Vespers'* pageants."

Antony and Cleopatra.

"THE machinery is contrived by Inigo Jones; the poetry composed by Chapman," said Lord Lindesay, as he led his fair companion to the part of Christ-church hall appropriated for the Queen's attendants; for the Princess had not her separate household as yet.

"'Tis an antique, or mock, masque, Lady Blanch," whispered Sir George Wharton, who, in a suit of great costliness, was parading from room to room, addressing couplets to some, tender glances to others, and rendering himself as ridiculous as a brave and honest man can ever be. "Poor George!" remarked Lord Lindesay, "arms are his sport, poetry, or

rather vanity, his profession. I dare swear that George would never have been a soldier save for the dress.—I marvel if George hath ever been in love.”

“Ten thousand times! to a dead certainty,” exclaimed the knight, who had been flitting from fair to fair, as if in the certain conviction that the happiness of womankind could be assured only by his personal activity and mental devotion.

“And why call you me, Lady Blanch, to-night?” asked Blanch, whilst at every word she spoke tears were ready to gush forth; yet striving to appear at ease, and light of heart.

“As an omen of future greatness!—I have a mighty faith in omens—and your ladyship will see anon,” answered the knight, wheeling round to bend to a lady who just entered, and upon whom all eyes were at that moment directed.

She was a young creature, so exquisitely beautiful, that, amid the throng of all that was then most graceful and most admired in England, she was pre-eminent. Her hair was of a light brown, falling “innocently,” as Sir George Wharton expressed it, on her neck and shoul-

ders, and set off by a bunch of scarlet-flowers on the left side. There was that perfect symmetry of feature, that soft and languishing expression, so prevailing in those days, when women were not encumbered with reflection; and the air of pensiveness,—her head on one side, and her figure drooping,—gave to her countenance an interest which it might not, in those who seek for the expressions of intellect, have otherwise excited. Yet she was of a cultured mind—good, affectionate, and faithful to those whom she loved;—one whom the incense of the world spoiled not; and who bore life's troubles with a fortitude little to be expected from a being so idolized.

“ ‘Beauties,’ it is said or sung, ‘are rapturous admirers of beauty’; *ergo*, contemplate the Lady Dorothea Sidney—erst, now my Lady Sunderland;—she’s very sad, for her lord is with Lord Forth nigh to Newbury, and an action is expected. Saccharissa is her poetic name, but becometh her not as it did of yore.”

“And is that beautiful creature the object of Mr. Waller’s praise?—A man whom I despise!” cried Blanch hastily. She turned to Lord Lindesay as she spoke;

but the eyes of that nobleman were bent on the ground ; his face was pale, as pale as ever Blanch could remember it ere the gallant nobleman had recovered from his wounds and his calamities ; and before Blanch could repeat her question, he walked hurriedly away.

Blanch felt regret at his departure ; for her uncle, the Marquis of Worcester, had commended her to the care and counsels of the noble Lindesay ; and he had discharged his trust with the delicacy of a gentleman. There was something in his calm, nay, stern, complexion of mind which overawed the young girl ; hence she, whose lively temper often led her into flippancy and indiscretions, profited by her intimacy with Lindesay—she gained self-command. She could not utter her careless sarcasms to him : her friendship for him was devoid of that tenderness which existed between her and Godolphin ; and which, even when there are great talents to be feared, and great virtues to be respected, unfetters the tongue. For once, the lovely Blanch Somerset—as beautiful, though not so famed, as Saccharissa,—had the advantage—to her inestimable ; to some, such is the constitution of the world,

perilous,—of a friendship with a man of principle, acquirement, and feeling.

She felt lonely and unhappy—insignificant, and inferior to those around her. The ease and grace with which all was said or done, struck her even more than the splendour and elegance of costume, the dignity and polish of the courtiers in this era of taste and cultivation. By degrees her mind, which had reverted, confusedly, to her own condition,—to her hopes, her penitence, her affections,—became absorbed in the immediate scene before her—as much absorbed, and with as little reference to self, as we, even in these degenerate days, are apt to become when we gaze upon the shifting scenes of a melo-drama or tragedy.

It was not the pageant that concentrated Blanch's attention, although that, (even robbed, as it was, by the poverty of which all complained, but which none displayed,) was still so splendid that the Court chroniclers found it difficult to do it justice. She seemed, indeed, riveted, as the machinery, or rack, as it was called, representing clouds, opened, and forth came fifty "choice gentlemen," as the attendant herald proclaimed them, with

every one a footman to attend him ; some in Indian habits ; some, like the princes of Barbary, in suits richly embroidered with golden suns, and wearing about their necks ruffs of feathers, spangled with pearls and silver, whilst lofty coronets upon their heads were set with gems.

A band of musicians, and a procession of torches, two deep, succeeded these native potentates ; the rack closed again ; the sun, moon, and stars, depicted with a liberal hand, all shining at one time aloft in the clouds, stood still, twinkling to their hearts' content ; the Indians, and the rivals in splendour, the Africans, fell back, forming a circle, into which danced a gay and gallant band, composed of the fairest ladies of the Court, and of the most graceful of the young nobility. There had been a time when even the Queen had joined in such diversions, and when she used to tread a measure with the Prince Palatine, Charles ; but those days were over—not alone because the enemies of prelacy and of dancing, who seemed to be ever united, had condemned this act of condescension as severely as if the Queen had committed some heinous

crime; but because the careless days of youth, and the light heart, were gone, never to return.

The dancing ceased; the torch-bearers, the Indians, the wearers of the feathery ruffs, the gay damsels, the dancing courtiers, retired. The hall was cleared; and Charles, dressed with unwonted splendour, wearing on his left sleeve a gorgeous star, and around his neck the collar and the George, entered the hall, attended by his officers of state; he ascended the dais, and seated himself under the Cloth of Estate. In an instant all was silence, and the bells of the cathedral, playing the old mass, which then chimed at the ninth hour—a late hour in those days—alone broke the stillness.

But when—in the midst of the great assembly, and in the space of that vast hall,—summoned by the herald, there came forward, with graceful dignity, the young, the brave Edward Herbert, the eyes of many who witnessed the scene were turned on Blanch, and the girl hung down her head as she perceived that even a kindly glance from the King was directed towards her. On the steps of the dais the young man knelt, his

head bowed before his sovereign, his manner composed, yet modest. Blanch would fain have sunk beneath the pavement of the hall. She longed for some vault to open and receive her. Confused, abashed, she saw the king draw forth his sword; she glanced, as in a dream, at the assembled spectators, all intent upon the ceremony. The words "Rise up, Sir Edward Herbert," uttered in a clear, loud voice, fell upon her ear. She ventured to raise her eyes: the King had given his sword to his sword-bearer; the young man, rising, and bending gracefully to their majesties, retired within the throng. There was an instant's silence; then, the confusion of many voices; the hall was cleared again, and the company, dividing into sets, prepared to dance a brawl—and Blanch began to breathe again.

At this moment Sir Edward Herbert drew near to her. "We are appointed by the master of the revels to dance together," he said gravely and coldly; he sighed as he added, "Perhaps, in the confusion of the dance, I may be allowed a few moments' discourse? The sets are complete, the dances have begun," he exclaimed eagerly; "thither, in that

recess, we could speak together; I shall not trouble you long."

"Interrupt not the betrothed!" exclaimed Sir George Wharton, passing at this instant, as he prepared to shake his limbs in the brawl. "Greeted I not you aright, my Lady Blanch?"

"We shall draw the eyes of the company on us," said Blanch, shrinking, as Edward took her reluctant hand. "Would I were at Ragland!"

"I echo that wish!" said Herbert. "Only one word, Blanch: believe that the courtesy I claim will not soon be asked again. To-morrow—but no matter; my fate is indifferent to you." He conducted her, as he spoke, into one of the recesses of the hall, now dark and dim, for the assembly were hastening to the gallery or banquet-room.

"No," said Blanch kindly; "we are kindred, and were playmates; it cannot be indifferent to me."

"O! Blanch!" said Edward, with much emotion, as he drew her far away from every observer; "it is not easy to break the spells which time, and love, and old custom, have cast around us. I have not ceased to hope. I cannot but believe

that thou seekest only to prove and vex me; that it is the wilful, imperious playmate that strives but to show her power. *I cannot* believe what thou didst say! It seems to me a dream!"

"I would I were at Ragland," repeated Blanch, sighing; "I am very unhappy."

"Blanch, I would, indeed, that thou wert there. I have a few brief moments only to discourse of my—*our* future prospects," resumed Herbert. "Thou hast mentioned to me Panzani's council, touching our contract. I know not what right he hath," said the young man indignantly, "to settle my affairs; let him look to his own dark intrigues, of which good men augur not well. Blanch, there lives not, under the mask of virtue, a man so wily, of designs so crafty, as the Father Gregorio Panzani. He is a tool of thy uncle, Glamorgan; his mission here is not approved of by true and loyal subjects. Beware of him!—I have no time to add more. 'There is!'"—and the young man's voice trembled as he spoke—"as the Father hath said, 'a way to break our contract:' think not that I will ever constrain thee to that; there is no need, Blanch, of so long, so degrading a process." As he

spoke, he drew from his vest a scroll—"Here is our contract;" and he looked for an instant at the sealed packet, and the young man, so recently flushed with joy and pride, sighed deeply, as he said, "It was signed in happy days. I give it back;"—he placed the packet in her hand;—"destroy it when thou wilt!" He turned from her hastily, and disappeared.

Blanch stood for some time confused, amazed; then, concealing the packet in the folds of her dress, turned to utter, in total absence of mind, vague replies to persons who came to congratulate her on the honour conferred upon her suitor; to listen—yet, not to listen—to encomiums on the signal act of valour which had gained him knighthood—an act she knew not of, nor cared to ask. But the consciousness that she had pained and wronged the kind companion of her youth clung to her, and could not, by any discourse of others, be diverted.

And now, a costly banquet, prepared at the expense of the vice-chancellor, lured to the gallery all who had places appointed for their reception. Blanch was among that number, and, automaton-like, she was conducted by a gen-

tleman of the King's household to her seat.

"Hast thou heard," said Lady Carlisle, across the table, to Sir George Wharton, "of the reinforcements that his majesty's party hath received? Sidney Godolphin hath returned to his allegiance, at the loss, simple soul," she added in a whisper, "of his house and lands; he hath kissed hands to-day, at Christ-church—was received graciously by his majesty, and hath obtained his commission."

"He will serve, as well as any other man, for a mark to shoot at in the next engagement," said Sir George Wharton.

"His motives for such a change?" asked Panzani insidiously; "do they, my Lady Carlisle, appear?"

"Ah! search not, holy Father, too deeply: the surface of things may content us; besides," added the countess, looking around her, "it is not meet to discourse on these matters. I see Lord Lindesay glancing darkly upon me."

"Impossible!" said Lord Lindesay.—"It may be possible that I may venture, indeed, to differ from your ladyship in your notions of mankind; that I may give credence to high motives when they are

consistent with the general character; that I may suppose a conversion to be sincere, and"—here a smile passed round, for Lady Carlisle's religious opinions were known to waver from popery to heresy, as it was called, from warm to cold, from fervour to scepticism,—"I believe, on my honour, Godolphin hath returned to his allegiance from the highest considerations!"

"Pooh! my Lord Lindesay—Impossible! Thou, my lord, to believe in that? He hath been disgusted; he hath some motive we know not of; he finds his influence failing with the Parliament—he is of no consideration there, since Cromwell hath been the head, and Fairfax the heart, of the army," were replies which burst from many voices.

"Every man hath his price," said Lord Glamorgan; "thinkest thou not so, my Lord Lindesay?"

"I will give up to thy better judgment on that point," replied Lord Lindesay contemptuously.

"Be assured," cried Lady Carlisle, "that all the eloquence which our new co-partner in loyalty hath spent in the house, amid an assembly of low burgesses, or stupid country squires, meaneth but

this—patriotism is good,—preferment is better.”

“Nobody,” remarked Lord Glamorgan, “could harangue more nobly than Master Godolphin, upon truth, fidelity, valour. I should like to see them proved.”

“I trust not to set out on a Forlorn Hope in company with him,” cried Sir George Wharton.

“No!” exclaimed Lord Lindesay, “for thou wouldst be distanced, George; Godolphin hath a cool head to contrive, as well as a strong spirit to face danger. Set not thyself as a parallel. But,” said Lord Lindesay, “cannot Mistress Blanch utter one word in favour of him who hath brought back her cousins from their prison of Dorchester? Wilt thou, too, desert thy friends, Mistress Blanch?” added Lindesay, struck by the paleness and agitation of Blanch, on whom all eyes were turned. But, observing her distress to proceed from no common cause, the peer delicately changed the discourse, and, addressing Lady Carlisle, found the far-famed Lucy quite ready for an attack upon *another* character; alive ever to the charms of detraction, and caring little of whose reputation she made a havoc, provided that there were enough

amusement for the hour, and sufficient occasion to display to her admirers the ready wit for which, no less than for her beauty, the arch countess was celebrated.

Lord Lindesay was soon disgusted by what he heard and saw; and, when the King withdrew for the night from the banquet, stole out, and found solace for the annoyance which a sensitive mind feels in uncongenial society, in the quiet and darkness of a scene that had of late been all brilliancy. Recent circumstances had not conspired to render Lord Lindesay more cheerful than had ever been his habit since the death of his father, and since other events, of which the public could surmise but scantily; and he could but barely tolerate the follies of George Wharton, or the mad spirits of the gay Cavaliers who had already, even before the ladies had withdrawn from the banquet, drunk deeply of potations somewhat stronger than the fascinating wines with which our modern gallants are wont to replenish their exhausted intellects. The moon arose, and the calm influence of her beams shining into the hall was imparted to the mind of Lindesay. A great crisis was at hand; the conference

at Uxbridge had been concluded without any terms; the scabbard was now for ever to be thrown away; one desperate effort more, and the great quarrel would be determined. How, it mattered but little to Lindesay individually, for he had lost all his patrimony in the cause; and even should the monarchy be secured, it was far from probable that an impoverished monarch would ever, during Lindesay's life-time, be able to indemnify his subjects for their losses.

At such a juncture, to one whose every feeling was bound up in the welfare of his sovereign, it was peculiarly jarring and dissonant to perceive the vexatious intrigues, the selfish cabals of those whose deeds were fate: and Lindesay reflected, with peculiar disgust, on the deep game which Glamorgan could not conceal from his observation; on the secret workings of Panzani; on the able aid of Lady Carlisle, and on the attempt of all three to strengthen each their individual interests, and to neglect those of their sovereign.

Whilst Lindesay revolved all these matters in his mind, some one drew near to him. He turned: and, disclosed by the moonlight, a face, attenuated by

anxiety—features that he at once recognised, although their expression spoke volumes of mental suffering which had stamped that countenance with premature age—riveted the gaze of the kindly-tempered Lindesay. It was returned with that searching look which we sometimes encounter from those on whom the world has set her mark, and which seems to say, “Do you not shun the proscribed one?” But, in an instant, that fine head was upraised, the bending figure became erect; for he who stood before Lord Lindesay knew not a dishonourable motive, and had no cause to be abashed. He had taken, in the early part of his career, the part which he believed to be just and right: his opinions had, in a changing world and in the course of many events, undergone an alteration: he had had courage enough to avow it, rather than to persist in error; and, throwing himself at his sovereign’s feet, to entreat that he might be permitted to aid a failing cause by his efforts. The world, which cannot judge of the thoughts of men, might and would attach many motives to this act. There was, in fact, one more powerful than all. The King’s cause was unfortunate; the downfall of monarchy must follow his ruin;

and Godolphin, in conjunction with many, whilst he hated despotism, dreaded still more the anarchy, or rather, misrule, which must succeed that event. Conscious, at all events, of his own good intentions, what had Godolphin to fear?

"Are you reconnoitring, Mr. Godolphin?" asked Lord Lindesay, proffering his hand, after, it must be confessed, a moment's hesitation. "Are you reconnoitring the scenes of your scholastic days? They are strangely altered, and may yet be more so. The air of this hall is infected by the vile fumes of tobacco from the Fellows' withdrawing room. Shall we walk forth into the air?"

"I am apt to think," resumed Lord Lindesay, as he paced, attended by Godolphin, the walks of Merton, "I am apt to think, that tobacco is what his late majesty King James described it, 'the lively pattern and image of hell.' Did you ever hear how he carried on the simile?"

"No, I do not remember," replied Godolphin, with an absent air.

"'Tobacco,' quoth his late most gracious majesty, 'is a smoke — so are the vanities of the world; it delighteth — so do worldly vanities; it maketh men drunk and lighteneth the head — such is the

effect also of worldly vanities. He who useth tobacco cannot leave it—it witcheth him—so do the vanities of the world; and were I to invite the devil to dinner, the King was wont to conclude,” added Lord Lindesay, laughing, “‘I should prepare for his entertainment three things—(his late Majesty was a true Scot)—a pig, a poll of ling, and mustard; and a pipe withal, for digestion!’”

“Yet the royal anathemas rather enhanced than impeded the use of the Virginian weed,” remarked Godolphin.

“Yes, for the kingly influence hath been, for some time, on the decline in this country,” observed Lord Lindesay. “And yet, the old-fashioned virtue of loyalty is not all worn out; there have been some notable examples of it, even in these turbulent days.” He checked himself suddenly—for this was a topic of some delicacy—and added abruptly, “you, Mr. Godolphin, as well as I, must look back, with regret, to the days when we walked these courts, not ‘fancy free,’ but little dreaming of the turmoils, the difficulties, the dangers of our career of manhood; not presaging,” added Lord Lindesay, with a deep-drawn sigh, “the losses and disappointments incident to all;

but from which we, in our pride of youth, fondly believed ourselves to be exempt."

Lord Lindesay leaned, as he spoke, against a buttress, and gazed upon the noble gateways of University College, the towers of which rose above into the calm, dark azure of a cloudless sky. It was late, and a deep repose reigned throughout the High Street; except, occasionally, when the voices of the Oxford Volunteers, who kept watch in the town, passed the word; or when, at a distance, a party of half-inebriated gowmsmen, amongst whom all scholastic discipline was now nearly extinguished, rushed from the scene of some nightly revel, to perform their duties as sentinels at the Holy Bush—little fit for their prescribed office; or broke into quarrels and tumults, commenced over the gaming table, to which—demoralized, during the late unsettled periods, to the last degree—the academic-military had become madly devoted.

"These are sad changes, Master Godolphin," remarked Lord Lindesay, as a party of youths, in white surplices, hastened past them, singing, in hoarse chorus, some cavalier ditties, the burden of which would ill suit the delicacy of modern

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ears; "yet they may be succeeded by worse; we may live to see our libraries robbed, our halls and colleges defaced, scarce even the trace of an University left; nay, we may have to hear that our pulpits are given over to Antinomian preachers, whose antic behaviour and puling tones are more fit for stage-players and country beggars, than for divines. It is strange, Mr. Godolphin, that men of sense and breeding, such as my Lord Denbigh—to say nought of my Lord Essex, who is yet an honour to the nobility of the realm—can endure the barefaced assurance, the paltry pretensions of these parliamentary chaplains.—But, wherefore, do you thus hurriedly seek to withdraw, Master Godolphin? wherefore break off so briefly our moonlight conference?"

"My lord," replied Godolphin loftily; "I came hither to pay my duty to my sovereign, to proffer my poor service, to receive my commission at his hands, to atone, as I may, for the errors of youth; but it ill suits my temper, or my feelings, to hear those, with whom I have been till now associated in this quarrel, vituperated; and I should be less than man to join in their detraction."

"You are right; give me your hand,

and pardon me," said Lord Lindesay; "and believe that I will touch upon such points no more. I do not scan your motives; honourable I will judge them to be."

"In spite of slander?" asked Godolphin bitterly; "think not that I am indifferent to calumny; think not, my lord, that it has not been a pang to me to lose the fellowship and esteem of some few exalted and noble spirits, to whom I must ever run counter; Essex—Denbigh—were my friends. Among the Royalists," added the young man, trembling, "I have not one whom I can justly call such, save my kinsman, and my brave brothers."

"Then it is a *sacrifice*? Your conversion?" asked Lord Lindesay, with marked emphasis.

"Permit me to tell you, my lord," cried Godolphin with dignity—"though I will not descend to express myself to another—to unfold my motives,—I may—I *shall* justify them by my actions."

"The courage that hath enabled you to brave the obloquy of change," returned Lord Lindesay, "may well be shown in the field—where none of us shall lack of opportunities of justifying our honour"

"There may be some," resumed Godolphin, in much agitation, "who, should I

fall, may seek to exculpate the memory of one whose course in life has not been so happy as to pass uncensured ; — there may be some to whom my honour may be dear. To-morrow, my lord, I join the army, to stand or fall. Say for me—for even one so insignificant may have his errors canvassed—that I sided heart and soul first with that cause which I believed to be the rallying point of liberty ; allege, and you can with truth, that I was guided, or blinded as you may deem it, by the reasonings of those powerful minds whose judgments were ‘ balanced upon the poles of truth.’ They are extinct—either in the grave, or in their high influence over those whom they would have led to security, but not assisted in destruction.”

“ Bear with me a little longer, my lord, whilst I beseech you to remember that in repairing to the King’s standard I have forfeited all that men worship in this life. I lose all prospect of aggrandizement; for those who look dispassionately on the affairs of England cannot but see that the parliament must and will prevail;— I incur bitter revilings; .I have already forfeited my patrimony, — house, lands, goods — upon which the Parliament hath seized immediately on my avowed change

—add to it—for there *is* one, Lord Lindsay, one who will hear my accusers in anguish,” added Godolphin, with a burst of uncontrolled emotion—“that the designs, the ambition of one man drove me *here*!”

“I understand you,” replied Lord Lindsay; “those to whom your reputation is dear—and it must be so to all honourable minds—shall not be ignorant of your—justification, I will not call it, for to me who believe there is but one object, but one belief, there is none requisite. When go you hence?”

“To-morrow,” said Godolphin, looking around him; “and it is scarcely likely that I shall ever look on these gothic towers, and the pinnacles of these old walls again.”

“And why speak so despondingly?” asked Lord Lindsay, moved by the melancholy tone of the sensitive and heart-stricken Godolphin,—“what hast thou so peculiarly to dread?”

“Success—existence! I am not so hardened, but that, if I may encounter in the battle some well-known, old, familiar face, my hands shall not become nerveless. I may be safe—I may live to see old companions trampled down, or carried bleeding to their dungeon-homes;

if, on the other hand, *I* am the captive, years of imprisonment, or the scaffold—yet I blush to enumerate this catalogue of possibilities. I may be happier—death!”

“Come, come,” said Lord Lindesay, soothingly; “be not so downcast—leave these future passages of thy days to Him who rules those fair witnesses of our disturbed state,” added the nobleman, raising his eyes, and pointing, as he spoke, to the heavens. He walked on some moments in solemn silence; then, suddenly resuming his discourse, he said, “You have referred to Oliver Cromwell, let us—but to change the theme, challenge the actions and character of yon Captain of the Ironsides. I remember him in the year 1640, when, at the beginning of that parliament, he first attracted notice by his attire. At that time I, like most of my day, vainly thought myself a courtly young gentleman—for we courtiers valued ourselves much on our good clothes. I came one morning into the House of Commons, where I then sat, and perceived a gentleman speaking whom I knew not. He was very ordinarily appareled in a plain cloth suit, which seemed to be made by an indifferent

country tailor. His linen was not very clean, and I remember a little speck or two of blood upon his collar, which was very small. His hat was without a hat-band—his sword stuck close to his side—then, as to his countenance, it was swollen and red, and his voice was untunable enough; but, it must be confessed, his eloquence was full of fervour.”

“Beneath this rude and unpromising exterior,” said Godolphin, “lay that powerful genius which Hampden detected. ‘Should this contest end in a war’—such was his remark — ‘yonder sloven will be the greatest man in Europe.’”

As Godolphin spoke, Lord Lindesay reached the door of his lodgings in the town. They were humble to the last degree; for even the Captain of the King’s body guard was forced to be content with such quarters as the overburdened and impoverished city could afford. It was with reluctance that Lord Lindesay bade farewell to the calumniated, but the gallant, Godolphin.

CHAPTER III.

There's no art,
To find the mind's construction in the face :
He was a gentleman, on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Macbeth.

ON the ensuing day, the reinforcement, of which Sidney Godolphin was appointed commander, left Oxford in order to join the army of the West,—and the name of the accomplished and unfortunate Godolphin was quickly forgotten in those busy circles in which, for a few days, it had furnished a topic for the idle, and an occasion for the splenetic to vent those conjectures which their hearts burned to disclose:—and, amid the crowd of events in the current of public affairs, the return of a private individual to his loyalty soon ceased to be any subject of excitement, save to one:—and she—how quickly would the ‘eloquent’ colour come into her face when she heard the beloved name uttered

with indifference, or perhaps coupled with some sinister motive, — some harsh condemnation of his course! For Godolphin had the gift of genius; he was therefore a mark for the indolent, the illiterate, and the callous. His eloquence and his errors were recalled to the minds of the envious at the same moment. Those who understood him not, set down a volume of undefined sins to his account. He was young, elegant, and admired; and the ungainly, the elderly, and the uninteresting, could have pardoned him his eloquence, but revenged themselves on the score of his person.

What a trial to her, who yearned to comfort and to cheer him! — who longed but to fly to Godolphin and to exclaim — “Whilst all calumniate, there is one true heart!” — What a cankering sorrow was it that no words might convey to him the thoughts that burned to be disclosed! For Godolphin, whom the parliamentarians reviled as a dishonoured man, and whom the royalists could but scantily commend for his late conversion, was too honourable to seek an interview with Blanch.

They met not; and she, who languished to have expressed to him her confidence in his truth, her admiration for his virtues,

her belief in the integrity of his motives, saw him not.

Godolphin departed, and he left the object of a cherished recollection—for, to his controlled mind, his tenderness for Blanch had not amounted to the ardent passion which he had inspired—he left her surrounded by snares. The designs of Lady Carlisle, the schemes of Lord Glamorgan, would have troubled her but little, save for one over-mastering influence, which swayed every sentiment of the confiding and inexperienced girl. For there was one who knew every throb of that tortured heart, every wish, each sad suppressed regret, of which the gay crowds who reveled in the Court diversions could never form a notion; there was one whose influence was secret, perpetual,—whose penetrating mind could too readily acquire a permanent control over the innocent heart and unreasoning intellect of eighteen.

The being for whom custom—for I will not profane Religion's sacred name—had gained the empire over Blanch, amongst others, was not solely the erudite churchman, abstracted from worldly pursuits and contending passions by vows and habits, which are said, erroneously I think, to

alter nature. He was a man of an acute sensibility—one who had known the conflict of strong emotions—one who had loved—and sinned. Panzani knew well the female heart; few had studied it more closely; and he was aware that there is in it but one principle stronger than love—devotion! He had seen the dearest ties, the most fondly-cherished hopes relinquished by woman before the altar, where prayers, wrung from a breaking heart, had consummated the sacrifice—by man, never. He, an adept in all the arts which convert piety into superstition; he, experienced in the woes and maladies of poor, weak human nature, had observed that, when once the spirit that is from on high is tarnished with that earthly dross, fanaticism, the victim of superstitious delusions ceases to be a free—I might almost add, a responsible—agent.

The joyous, the fearless Blanch at first resisted, then writhed beneath Panzani's influence. It was in vain. Slowly, but insidiously, his dread denunciations on the head of her who loved a heretic, acquired, by repetition, their full and dire power over her mind. Adieu to the light heart, the bounding step, the careless

fancy. Spell-bound was her reason—exertion was checked—hope extinguished. After a time—I have no desire nor skill to rehearse the process—the struggle ceased, the affections gave up the conflict, the priest prevailed.

“I will do what thou desirest. I will tear the remembrance of Godolphin from my heart. Father, direct—console me! Reconcile me to my Redeemer!”

Such were the words of Blanch, when, after confession, a long expostulation from the Father had ensued.

A burst of anguish accompanied these words. Blanch knelt before the Jesuit. “I am not worthy to look up!” she exclaimed, after some moments of passionate sorrow. “My sins will draw down vengeance on those I love. Father, speak the word again: tell me I am absolved!”

She sank upon the floor of the confessional as she spoke; a faintness came over her. Panzani raised her to a chair.

“Why do I revive? why am I spared, but for greater sorrow and sin?” said the unhappy girl, on reviving; “I *cannot* forget him!”

“But thou canst retrieve that sin by a greater act of virtue,” replied the priest

gently. He pointed to an image of the Holy Virgin as he spoke. "She, the pure Madonna, intercedes for thee," he said, while a smile played upon his lips.

Blanch raised her eyes timidly; her lips moved for some moments in prayer, but sobs checked their utterance. "I cannot pray! Oh, Father! take me from this place. Let me go home — home! Oh, let me never leave it more!"

"There is a higher, holier path to pursue," replied the Father. "Pray to the Virgin to show it to thee, my daughter. Thou hast sinned; thy heart hath strayed from the right path; thou must atone, not only by tears and penance, but by a great, a holy sacrifice!"

"Give me time; permit me but to be at home, and I will do all thou counselest," said Blanch, in deep humiliation; for she felt assured that the Father referred to Herbert. Panzani replied not; and Blanch, drawing her hood over her face, and, wrapping herself in a long cloak, departed from the obscure chapel where Panzani, and those of the Romish faith, were covertly permitted to perform mass, and to receive, amongst other believers, the Queen to confessional.

Blanch wound her way quickly, fol-

lowed by two attendants, through the poorer streets of Oxford, in order to regain the safe shelter of Merton. For Oxford was in that state of unlicensed demoralization which the long residence of a garrison, under any circumstances, is prone to produce: and the news that Lord Essex, at the head of the parliament troops, had advanced from Reading towards Newbury, had crowded the ramparts with the inquisitive, as well as the useful. The King, who habitually rose early, and generally visited the fortifications at day-break, had repaired to a tower of observation; the whole population of Oxford was in the streets.

There were Doctors and Proctors, a little the less steady for the previous night's banquet, walking arm-in-arm together; some said for the convenience of mutual support. There were Cavaliers crossing the streets to escort fair ladies to their respective colleges. There were peasants coming in with provisions. There were military riding gallantly in from the out-works. There was no talk to be heard, save of trenches, approaches, mortars, granados, stands of arms; and no news that any one cared to hear, save of Waller's Red Trained-bands from Westminster,—of

which the regular military spoke as sneeringly as the physician does of an empiric, or the parson of a dissenting minister, (with a touch of rivalry nevertheless,)—or of the Green Auxiliaries of the Tower Hamlets—a militia easily laughed at, but not so easily discomfited, as the sallies from Basing House had recently proved.

Night came on ere the Court, to whom such intelligence was of some small moment, had gained much knowledge of what was known on the ramparts; and no orders were issued from the lord chamberlain to supersede the amusements which had been arranged to divert the high-born denizens of Christ-church and Merton; and a throng of the gay and the great attended, as was their wont, at the first notes of the tabor in the gallery of Merton.

The Queen was not there; the King had not returned from the ramparts; most of the military, and many of those whom the ladies cared to please, had been summoned away; even the compliments of Sir George Wharton resounded not through the thin assembly.—“And, upon my life!” said Lady Carlisle, as she walked holding a furred mantle around her, as if

she feared contamination, " 'tis not worth the while to take one's mask off. If I smile, I have a grin from yon group of toothless Doctors of the canon law. A college tutor claims my hand for the brawl. Pshaw! as well dance with Pauzani; or I stumble against a Bachelor of Arts;—I trust he hath clean linen once a year. Heigho! for my brother of Northumberland's halls at Warwick; and a hearty laugh at all this shadow of a Court, with Denbigh and Kimbolton. 'Tis a fatal error,"—and the countess turned from the Provost of Worcester College, who was trying his first essay in gallantry at sixty-five, — " 'tis a fatal error to take the losing side; I wonder what possessed me when I left Whitehall."

A stately banquet interrupted the countess's reflections. "Of course Saccharissa has a fit of the hysterics," was her ladyship's observation to Lord Jermyn, who came with the Queen's gracious message, and to announce that her majesty was indisposed. "There! she faints! No one worth caring for to catch her up! Ah! my pretty Sunderland, an old trick; her eye-lashes are long, and she likes to show them, Jermyn; but there are none to discourse about them in rhyme—Edmund Waller is not here."

“ I am so afraid of my diamond aglets, in this vile company,” added Lady Carlisle, an instant afterwards. “ Pry’thee, my lord, your hand.” And the haughty countess arose as she spoke, and left the few high-bred ladies to cope with elderly doctors, and to sneer at the civilities of their gay adorers as they might. It was not the mode for the fine ladies of the Court to cast a thought upon the worthy, and loyal, and learned Oxford dormice, as they were called, who had awakened up and crept out in the civil war. It was all very proper for his majesty to be gracious to those who had given up their colleges to be magazines, and who had devoted themselves to the military service so unwonted. It was all very well to occupy their dormitories, and to honour the poor creatures by drinking their best wines—their convent sherry, their Canary sack; beloved old stores now carried forth hospitably for a thankless crew; but, as to aught beyond a glance once a week, or a smile upon high occasions, it was a condescension unheard of, and not to be pardoned.

Meantime the banquet—the wreck of which was greatly enjoyed, after all was over, by some hungry under-graduates —

came to a close ; then the fragments were thrown into baskets for the poor—an old conventional custom—and a solemn stillness pervaded the town.

The night was sharp and cold, and, towards morning, flakes of snow descended upon the summits of those spires and domes and pinnacles which rose 'reserving to this one choice, and still secure, spot in fated England the characters of study and of peace. Silent and slow was that metamorphosis which is so beautiful and wonderful ; and the light battlements of Merton, marked by their white outline, were contrasted with the dark green-sward and the yew trees but partially clad with snow below. Sad and desponding were the fair inhabitants beneath the cloistral building, where the Queen lodged : her majesty slept not, but walked, during the whole night, to and fro, trying vainly to catch a glimpse of the outer air, to discern the first faint streaks that denoted daylight.

Morning dawned upon the city ; it was ushered in by the clanging of alarm bells from University-church, Christ-church, and from every spire and tower in Oxford. And the sound of artillery, "like rumbling" distant thunder, was heard by

the affrighted women who dwelt in the colleges. The streets were now crowded with soldiers, conveying ammunition and arms to the ramparts from the schools, which were all converted into magazines; the Oxford Horse paraded the streets; watches were doubled at every important point; and provisions were brought into the town all day in carts and baskets from the villages around the city. The King, it was now publicly asserted, had gone forth in the night, attended by a large body of the garrison, and by a corps of Oxford Bowmen, towards Newbury; that place so fatal to the cause of the Royalists, — a town scarcely six and twenty miles distant from Oxford. More than this, none knew; for there was the greatest precaution taken to build up the hopes of the Royalists. All day long, whilst affright and consternation sat on every countenance, an ominous, terrible silence reigned in the adjacent country: some fearful and dire event had happened which paralysed the villagers around, arresting the footsteps even of the unwary; the garrisons of Reading and Abingdon, which formed, as it were, outworks to Oxford, were all gathered within their own works, holding them-

selves in resolute readiness for some expected attack.

Blanch was now called into attendance on the Queen ; for, of her majesty's ladies-in-waiting, most had relatives—brothers, husbands, parents, in Prince Rupert's army, which was known to be at Newbury. The suspense was dreadful! and they who could have faced danger sank, overwhelmed, under the agonies which were protracted, like a slow but sure malady; certain to some to have a fatal issue.

Thus passed the day. Towards evening, ere yet the sun went down, news were brought by the scouts, that the King's army was seen, slowly and in good order, returning towards the city. The spirits of the unhappy were instantly upraised, almost to an intoxication of happiness, from the contrast to the recent intensity of suffering. The bells now rang merrily—glasses went round in the hall. The sapient dons came forth from their rooms, where they had thought it prudent, for their own preservation, and, consequently, for the good of the country, to retire. The Queen ordered her toilet to be prepared, and commanded, that the festivities of the evening,

which had been concerted, should go on as usual.

Her majesty was dressed gaily, for there were to be a masque and banquet, when a messenger from the King was announced, and Sir Edward Herbert, pale, bespattered with mud, and with a face of woe and anxiety, knelt before her.

"What news—what news from the camp?" cried the Queen eagerly; the last words were reiterated in a softened tone, for the face of the messenger was ominous.

"Madam, his majesty bids me tell you, that the Prince's army have encountered my Lord Essex's forces at Newbury. The King, madam, joined Prince Rupert just after break of day."

"Well, sir," returned Henrietta, with the spirit of her character strongly painted on her face. "Our side hath prevailed, of course?"

"The contest was disputed, madam, with great fierceness and courage, the enemy preserving good order. The King's Horse," adding the young officer, in a tone of great excitement, and whilst his frame shook with agitation,

"charging the enemy's troops with wonderful boldness, so that they routed them in most places."

"You are exhausted, young man," said the Queen, perceiving that the youth could not proceed. "Give him wine?"

"The London Train-bands, madam, in the pay of the Parliament, and the Auxiliary regiments, of whose valour we have, unhappily, made too small account, behaved themselves to wonder. The King bade me inform your majesty—"

"They have not defeated us!—the base-born, Presbyterian Atheists!" cried the Queen, transported by fear and passion. "The Parliament's men, sir, always cry 'victory!' 'Tis their trick!"

"Madam," returned Sir Edward Herbert, in a tone of decision, "it is but too true. The Trained-bands stood as a bulwark to defend the rest of the enemy's troops; and when their wings of horse were scattered, though Prince Rupert himself rode up to charge them, he could make no impression on their stand of pikes, but was forced to wheel about—the day was theirs! Night parted the combatants." He paused—for the Queen had fainted; her hopes had been san-

guine, her spirit was high. And the proclamation which had been issued against her head by Parliament, denouncing her as a traitor, brought the calamities of her country home to her—as a matter, independent of the monarchy, of personal concern. The dread of assassination, vague and fearful, was seldom absent from the mind of Henrietta, and already had a horrible presentiment of coming ill shaken her nerves, and weakened the powers of her judgment.

“Dr. Mayerne,” she said, as she slowly recovered, addressing her physician—a man of harsh manners, who had a remarkable ascendancy over his unhappy mistress, (perhaps, from knowing *too* much of her character, which could not defy slander) “I feel my reason leaving me,—I shall go mad.”

“Madam,” replied the physician, with the utmost *sang froid*, as he poured some powerful julep into a glass, “you can scarcely be worse than you are now—you are mad already!”

“Mistress Blanch,” said the Queen, humbly,—as humbly as if the dreaded degradation had already arrived,—“do me the grace to seek that young Cavalier. Tell him,” added Henrietta, with a burst

of tears, "he need come here no more. I will not see a bird of ill omen;—yet, ask him how fares the King,—nay, if it must be, bid him enter."

Blanch obeyed the behest; there was little time for converse with her kinsman, as she delivered her message; but the tearful look, the hand which placed itself in his, told Edward Herbert that he was welcomed kindly; and long was the mute assurance treasured in his memory.

"Who," asked the Queen impatiently, as he entered, "who are killed?—who are spared?—how many have our side lost?"

"Alas! madam—"

"What, more bad news? Tell it quickly, sir,—then let us to the masque: the spirits of our people must be kept up," said the Queen, with a deep sigh. "Well, sir! what have we lost? and what have the rebels lost? Serving men and upstarts!—do ye not call them so?—are all they have to lose, and base people,—ah! all ours are losses, truly,—the flower of the realm!—you,—you weep, sir! Fie! you are but a young soldier, Sir Edward, and, trust me, the practice of postures in the artillery-garden will not make a

soldier,—you shall see more service, sir,” said the little Queen, —not long since herself a general,—raising herself up, and looking archly at the young man, her French vivacity breaking out in the midst of her tears.

“ Pardon me, madam, — the country must needs weep. The Earl of Carnarvon, my friend,”—the officer made a solemn pause,—“ fell in this action. He was brought into an inn at Newbury, where his majesty came to see him. He had just life enough to speak to his majesty, and died in his presence. We were all troubled for the loss of so brave a gentleman ; but the concern,” faltered the young man, “ that our Royal Master discovered, troubled us still more. The King shed tears at the sight of his dying servant ; nor would he quit the bedside until he saw that all hopes of life were gone. ‘ I have lost an honest, approved servant, and I can ill spare such,’ were his majesty’s words to me.” The young officer waited for a few moments after speaking, and, perceiving that the Queen was overpowered by her feelings, he again slowly and respectfully retired.

But, in a short time, Sir Edward Herbert was recalled. The Queen had dried

her tears, her dress was re-composed, a strong cordial administered to her flushed her haggard cheek, and she looked bright and beautiful, almost as when she first won the heart of Charles. Herbert was struck by the metamorphosis; but he remembered the versatile character of her nation, and waited respectfully, and without any signs of surprise in his manner.

"The victory then, is doubtful?" asked the Queen, speaking in French, "Then look to thy words!—Let bonfires be lighted bells rung, and the honour claimed for *our* side.—Stay, carry this billet to his majesty; meet him ere he cross the river.—Despatch! 'Tis to bid him enter in triumph, and as a victor,—not with weak tears and downcast looks. Order cannon to be fired by way of *feu de joie*. And bid the masquers not tarry any longer, but hasten to the gallery," she added, turning to her chamberlain.

Sir Edward Herbert bent his knee, and kissed the fair and trembling hand, which had held a Field-marshal's baton within its weak grasp, as he raised his eyes in silence to the sparkling countenance of Henrietta. There was a melancholy in the young soldier's gaze; for the loss on the Royalists' side had been double that of

their foes, and to Essex was left the field,—to Essex the pillage of the valiant dead,—to the Cavaliers the sad comfort of burying the stripped and mutilated bodies, when the army opposed to them had satiated their thirst for plunder.

Harassed and exhausted as he was, Sir Edward prepared to obey the commands of her majesty. As he descended the staircase, he stopped,—one wistful look towards the corridor which led to the apartments of his once affianced bride, one throb of passionate feeling checked his steps. He saw before him his predestined course. The orders he had received from the Commander-general of the forces around Oxford, Lord Forth, were, to join Prince Rupert's army with the body of tenantry that young Herbert had mustered and equipped. He felt assured that he should return to Oxford no more. In dangers—perhaps ere long, to be terminated by death—was his future career to consist; and the gallant young man, brave as he was, would have given one half of his future honours for one short, last interview with her for whose well being and safety his anxieties amounted to agony. For a few moments, he stood irresolute; his attendants holding

his horses in vain,—then he mounted hurriedly, and rode precipitately away. As he galloped down towards the river, one small window in Merton College, lighted, caught his attention. He paused for an instant ; the word ‘farewell,’ was muttered in the bitterness of grief—and in a few moments he was on his way to meet the King.

CHAPTER IV.

Ye sov'raigne cities of this wofull isle,
 In cypresse wreathes, and your most sad attire,
 Prepare yourselves to build the funeral pile ;
 Lay your pale hands to this exequious fire ;
 All mirth and comfort from your streets exile,
 Fill'd with the groanes of men when they expire :
 The noblest blood approaching to be shed
 That ever dropt from any of your dead.

Barons' Warres.—DRAYTON.

“AND how fares the Lady Sunderland to-day? Hath she recovered from her phrensy — or doth she still moan and bewail herself like one who hath no hope?” inquired Father Puzani of Lady Carlisle, as he paced along the cloisters of Merton on the day after the return of the King from Newbury.

“In truth, she's desperate,” returned Lady Carlisle, speaking, as did the Father, in French. “Her passion of grief has lasted a long time ; it hath had every symptom of an incurable malady. First, on the news arriving that my lord was slain, she fell into a swoon : — all

vastly appropriate, Father, for the bride scarcely out of the honey-moon, but mighty unwise, between you and me; in fact, married matrons know better. Then, reviving, she raved, and tore her hair:—that was just the thing for the gossips, but how rash and needless for a sensible woman! Between you and me, my fair niece's ringlets are supposed by some not to be all her own; for some time, people must keep up their beauty, if they can, you know."

"It was a sad, untimely death, though," observed the Jesuit, smiling mechanically—every look, every word, was, in him, the result of long-studied effect:—"and, then, they loved each other—a rare and—"

"—A simple proceeding," interrupted Lady Carlisle. "Saccharissa, with my assistance, might have provided for herself somewhat better than she did. However, 'tis not too late. I was going to observe," added the countess, replacing a curl blown by the wind, as she spoke, "that Lady Sunderland's passion hath reached its last stage—a moody silence, which will not last long: by this day se'nnight she will eat and sleep. By the way, that young simpleton whom my Lord

Glamorgan commended to me will be the ascendant star in our horizon whilst Saccharissa languishes. What is to be done with her? What is her history?"

"A very common one, as your ladyship will shortly perceive. 'Tis, between you and me," answered Panzani, lowering his voice, "the lady is betrothed to one man, and loves another, and of that damnable faith which—"

"—Enough, Father! I am no bigot, and time presses; nay, here is even one who comes to bid me to her majesty. *N'importe*, there are other ladies who can fashion the Queen's shoe-ties. O make a thousand thousand apologies to my royal mistress!" cried Lady Carlisle to a lady who came to call her; "and beseech one half hour's grace, for I am sick and sad! My eyes are red with weeping, and I would not chagrin my gracious mistress with my presence. Say I have the megrims, good girl," added the countess, "and leave me to myself. And now, Father Panzani, touching this thy falling angel, what?"

"Her betrothed, Sir Edward Herbert, hath given her back her contract. Hist! answer not aloud. 'Twas at confession some hints were given; and to no one—save

to your ladyship, whom I so much value—would I disclose what she hath said; and for nought, save the public weal—”

“— I know — and the advancement of thy private interests with my Lord Glamorgan, who wisheth the maiden well married: a holy object!— a most sacred object! Well! Of course Glamorgan will not compel a marriage to an obscure Shropshire squire—knighted, to be sure, in one of those showers which rain down coronets, and are followed by gentle dew-drops of baronetage and knighthood? In these times, the youth and comeliness, which I, indeed, begin to hold very cheap, must yet be made serviceable to the good cause. A girl that breaks her contract is ready for *any* suitors: I shall provide her one.”

“Your ladyship’s pious efforts,” answered the Jesuit, in soft accents, “shall be in all things seconded by my poor aid. We must do all for the faith. We must fight the fight; nought can save this distracted kingdom, save that one great act—”

“— Which you speculative churchmen may dream of, but which will never be accomplished while Charles lives,” replied Lady Carlisle seriously. “Men call the

King obstinate ; for my part, I approve of his majesty, and would fain bring him into vogue again."

"— As ten years ago you might have done," thought Puzani, as he glanced at the wrinkles which had begun to undermine some part of Lady Carlisle's famous influence—an influence which neither the ambitious Strafford, nor the hot-headed Laud, could, in former days, withstand. Intellect and beauty combined form, indeed, a powerful social engine ; but when the beauty wanes, the force of intellect is apt sometimes to flash in the pan.

" Our party must be strengthened," said Lady Carlisle, musing. " Goring— what dost thou think of *him* ? The suit between him and his lady hath nearly been determined in his favour : in another month he may be single again. What say you to preparing her mind thus ? Talk to her of his boundless liberality—to himself, I mean, between thee and me ; his dauntless prowess !—speak in big words ; his chivalrous honour !—there's no need for the child to know all about his behaviour to the Lady Lettice. I take it for granted she is young and tender, which means childish and silly. Move her on the score of her family ; how such an

alliance would aggrandise them. Work upon her—ah! thou well knowest how!—by fasting and prayer: make her as thin as a skeleton on a tomb-stone; reduce her into obedience, and then—dispose of her as thou best may for the public benefit. Ah! Father, if all the world had *our* sentiments, how well would the virtuous prosper!”

“Your ladyship is, indeed, all goodness, the patriot in all,” returned the Father, bending low, so that the arch countess could not read the sly contempt expressed in his quick eye. “I will use my poor abilities.”

“Why, Father, did you ever fail? Is not the human heart your province—your property—your”—prey? the lady was going to say, but she checked herself. “I must go within: they have spoiled my looks for the evening—these rude winds!” cried the countess. “Thy blessing, Father!” and she tripped away into the hall of Merton.

As the countess proceeded to her chamber, leisurely, in spite of the Queen’s summons, her thoughts ran rapidly over the character of the man whom she desired to make a tool for political purposes. Mankind were to her but puppets, to be

moved as instruments to accomplish whatever faction chanced to be uppermost in Lady Carlisle's capricious favour. Her heart had, in the early part of the rebellion, been with the Parliament; but, like her brother, Algernon Percy, Lady Carlisle was touched to the quick when the leveling process came near home. Like the Earl of Northumberland, she was immoderately proud; and the utter destruction of the nobility arrested her proceedings, and fixed her for once—too late!—to the side of the Royalists.

Hence her secret compact with Glamorgan; and now, the arbitrary and intriguing peeress sincerely wished that the King might succeed—provided that success were enhanced by that faction which, amid countless others, harassed—one might also say, ruined—the unfortunate monarch, whose good fortune in the field was for ever counterbalanced by his errors in the cabinet.

“General Goring,” said the countess to herself, as she dismissed her attendants, and paced up and down her room, “is handsome. Yes! although there be a certain wildness of look which young damsels may shrink from, he is handsome. Is he manageable? I know not. Of this

I am sure—he will be foremost in the chace after honours and preferment;—his bravery equaled by his generalship; and he has no scruples. Admirable Goring! Of course,” pursued the countess in her soliloquy, “he will fall in love with Mistress Blanch,—in love, after *his* fashion! I could manage that, provided the reckless gallant is not at his old fancies again.” And here Lady Carlisle glanced at a projecting Genoa looking-glass, set in a richly-carved frame, and she pulled a stray ringlet into its place again as she looked. “And, perhaps, I may be the worst person to persuade him into it. However, we shall see. And the prospect of wedding Glamorgan’s niece, and of allying himself with such a family as those Somersets—so extravagantly and ridiculously loyal; so rich; so princelike, and Glamorgan so subtle and skilful!—and then, the promised alliance between Glamorgan’s son and the Princess! It will do!” concluded the Countess of Carlisle, rising quickly, and clapping her fair hands gently together. “And now, for a long face and a white handkerchief, and—my poor, darling, dear, doleful Dorothea—widowed Lady Sunderland!”

Lady Carlisle issued forth as she spoke,

and crept with a demure countenance down a passage. A door was half open at the end, and Lady Carlisle entered. She started back as she walked in, for Lord Lindesay was kneeling beside a chair, in which the lovely Saccharissa reclined, and was holding her hand. "Hum! early days—my lord killed only three days ago! I had best retire outside," thought Lady Carlisle. Yet she stayed; for she perceived that Blanch was also in the apartment.

Saccharissa was speaking,—“And I trust to your goodness, my lord, and to the memory of her, who”——

“O name her not!” cried Lord Lindesay, his voice half stifled by agitation. “Do not revert to that passage of our former lives!—all is forgotten and forgiven!”

“My dear, prized friend,” was Lady Sunderland’s reply, as Lord Lindesay rose and still remained near her. “I little thought that thou wouldst come to me;—speak to me—console me; and yet the wretched have *some* claim!” She melted into tears as she spoke. “Pardon me! I have sent for you, my lord, and now I bid you leave me. I am unfit even for solace.”

Lord Lindesay instantly withdrew, bowing with deep respect ; and the mourner, the widowed bride—for scarcely three months had Lady Sunderland been united to the object of her passionate attachment—was left to the consolations of her female friends.

Lord Lindesay was obliged to take his post upon the ramparts. As his eye stretched over the expanse of country which lay between Oxford and Newbury, this brave adherent of Charles revolved in his mind the fate of Lucius, Lord Falkland, who had been killed in that battle ; and wondered whether the body of his gallant friend, which was not discovered for some time, had been reclaimed and interred. And then, as Lindesay walked from post to post, that mysterious presage which had visited the mind of the noble Falkland on the morning of the battle, was the subject of mournful reflection. “ I am weary,” he said, “ of the times, and foresee misery to my country ; but I shall be out of it before night.”

It was a melancholy consolation to Lindesay to dwell on the bright, unspotted vision of goodness which the memory of his friend—for to Falkland he was allied by the tenderest regard—brought,

in contrast with the littleness, the sordid designs, the petulant and intriguing spirit by which the partisans of the King, who were not in action, were disturbed and dishonoured. It was a comfort to the bereaved friend, the high-minded Lindesay, to reflect on the departed—almost with a sorrowful satisfaction that he had reached the termination of all earthly trouble; for the primitive simplicity and integrity of his life, his piety, his benevolence, his moderation, had fitted him—as his sorrowing friend justly thought—for a heavenly sphere; whilst they were qualities which, perhaps, unfitted him for the cabals, and consequent acts of treachery and defection, by which already the party of the Royalists were becoming disunited.

“He dreaded the success of his own party almost as much as that of the other,” remarked Lord Lindesay to Sir George Wharton, who was on duty, and turned to join Lindesay in a quick walk round the ramparts. “And there are those who have heard him oft-times exclaim, with sighs, — ‘Peace! peace!’ Alas, how was he altered,” pursued Lindesay, “by the woes of his unhappy country! He, whose courtesy and goodness were the delight of all who knew

him, had become, of late, very sad, pale in countenance :—nay, his very temper was changed since this unnatural war began—he was quick, and sharp, and severe.”

“And there were many,” said Wharton, “who accounted him proud and imperious.”

“They knew him not, then,” returned Lindesay. The earl gazed, as he spoke, and his eyes were moistened as he looked towards Newbury.

“There lies one,” he said, extending his arm, “who was superior to all those passions and motives that affect vulgar minds—who had no other ambition than of knowledge, and to be reputed a lover of all good men. It was an honour, my friend, to be esteemed by one who never admitted a man to his intimate conversation who was not of untouched reputation in integrity.

“I think, George,” resumed Lord Lindesay, after walking for some time in deep silence, “we may scantily see the road which winds to Burford Priory in yon quarter? It was there he contracted a familiarity with the men of learning in this university, who were wont to repair to his house, as to a college in a purer air—a university in a less compass. Yet

his valour was of the clearest," resumed the soldier, with increasing animation. "He was not without some appetite for danger, though I will confess to you, Wharton, that at Edge-Hill, one might have thought that he came into the field from curiosity, and to prevent the shedding of blood, he was even so solicitous to save those who had thrown away their arms."

"Early hath he been cut off," added the earl, overcome by strong emotion, as he rehearsed the virtues of the "Flower of Chivalry." "Yet, let us not lament him! he had despatched a great deal of the true business of life, and quitted it with as much innocency as the youngest who entereth into this world's concerns. And now let us honour his memory by our actions."

"Have you heard," said George Wharton, as the earl and he walked rapidly on, "that Sidney Godolphin hath joined the army of the West? Yes, his conversion hath been sincere, though many doubted that it would prove but a meteor of the hour. He hath been, however, disgusted with these people. He dreadeth, so they report, the designs of the Self-denying-ordnance faction, and hath expressed himself

afraid for his country, of course, — for all these patriots make that their watch-word — lest the King should fall into the hands of that bloody-minded faction. I begin to think that the gentleman hath some sense in his head.”

“And with sincerity, George,” interrupted Lindesay. “He is fearful, having contributed to set the wheel in motion, lest the state carriage should roll on too far. He hath incurred much censure in the change, which he may best wipe off by valour in the field. I think him right. No eloquence,” he continued, “nought but valour can efface the blot which we politicians unworthily affix upon him who dareth to be sincere, and to avow an error. Human nature is too base to admit aught but ill motives for the candour that ventures to say, ‘I have been wrong!’ Where is Godolphin now?”

“He is, as a simple volunteer, refusing all command, gone to the relief of Greenland House, with Hawkins’s regiment. His patrimony, which is but that of a younger brother, was disposed of by the Parliament immediately on his conversion. This I had from General Goring who is just arrived from Portsmouth, having urgent business with his majesty.

The parliament faction cover Godolphin with obloquy. Yet hath he not espoused our Royal Master's cause until it seemed to bear the aspect of a losing one. And the approach of Lord Essex's army to Newbury, which hath since been followed by so fatal an issue, was the signal for Godolphin, whom all good men must honour, to proffer his services to the Marquis of Hertford."

"These are strange times," answered Lord Lindesay, as he wrapped his cloak around him, for a driving wind with sleet and rain augured a night of foul weather; "when men can scarcely do well, but some must needs find out a flaw in the intention."

CHAPTER V.

“The rose’s bright brief hour of joy,
Such, unto him was given—
Go, thou must alone, my boy,
Thy brother is in Heaven !”

As yet, the near approach of danger had not shaken the happy security of Ragland Castle ; but there were woes of a different nature which cast their shadow over the still prosperous family of the Somersets.

One night—that night of sleet and of boisterous wind, in which Lord Lindesay paced the ramparts—a group of persons was assembled within the chamber of Lady Cecily, around the death-bed of Everard.

Not a wail, not a murmur, was heard in that apartment—all was still. Opposite to her child, on the bed, sat the mother, so mute and motionless that those who knew not that she had for days, nay

weeks, scarcely slept ; that she had rested not her foot, nor withdrawn her gaze from her dying son, nor taken sustenance, save by his bed-side—those who had not seen the ceaseless efforts of the *mother* might have deemed her present stillness, apathy.

One short half hour before, Lady Cecily, aided by the faithful Margery, had busily, though hopelessly, plied the prescribed remedies,—enforced so gently that the pliant child resisted not,—nourishment and cordials. Then the sunken eye had still been bright and wandering—the restless hand had sought that of those whom he best knew and loved—there was then warmth, sense, movement. Within a short space of time, however, all was changed ; those sweet eyes were upraised and fixed, the hands were still ; the heaving breast alone proclaimed that life was not extinct. No fluid could be swallowed, for death had laid his grasp upon the muscles ; the mind was scarcely conscious ; the little one, so long parted from those whom he loved — so lately found, was gently sinking to rest.

The moment had been long expected, sometimes even prayed for, for the gradual decline had indicated but one certain ter-

mination; and the mother had oftentimes thought that she could better bear the separation from her child, than his suffering here. Sometimes she had fancied this, but oftener she had shrunk from the too sure event; she had prized every moment of that life so dear to her; she had hung on every accent from those pale lips, and bade her heart, in vain, to be resigned.

At the crisis, however, Cecily was calm, and, at the bidding of the castle physician, she had ceased her exertions, and borne, without tears, to be told, they are of no avail—the hour is come. Yet, as the soft breathing became fainter, as the features assumed a fixed and livid look, Lady Cecily's resolution failed; and the silence of the chamber was broken by a short convulsive sob, wrung from the mother's heart. She threw herself into the arms of Margery, and begged to be taken from the room,

“I cannot see him die,” was all that she could say; she was conveyed to a couch remote from the bed, where the last sigh, the last gasp, the parting look to which affection gives its own fond meaning, were spared to her whose sorrows none could share.

Lady Cecily was carried fainting from

the chamber of death; the attendants followed her, the physician respectfully withdrew, and Margery and Lady Arundel were left near the lifeless Everard. The nurse was overcome by her unsubdued grief; and her bursting sobs were, as Lady Arundel thought, ill-suited to the holy calm of that rest, of which the corpse of infancy presents so beautiful an image.

"Retire, Margery," said Lady Arundel, "I will remain until they come to perform the offices, which must be done. Go," she added hastily, "leave me with him."

Ere Margery withdrew, the door opened, and the Marquis of Worcester entered. He knew not that the child had expired; he had wished to be in time to support and comfort the mother.

The brother and sister, advanced in life, experienced in life's troubles, looked at each other expressively, and tears started into the old man's eyes as he turned them upon the cold remains of his once fondly-cherished plaything—the object of late of the cares of an attached family and household—and sobs burst forth as the marquis gave vent in words to his feelings.

"Those who tore the child from his mother,"—he faltered, "might well deserve our curses; yet, Great God! revilings are not to be the fruits of thy chastisements! Pardon them!—this their victim."

He was silent, and looked for many moments calmly upon the marble features of the child. Nothing reveals more plainly the fruitlessness of human efforts than the chamber of death, ere yet the remedies, the soothing comforts vainly tried, the appliances and means to boot of the art of nursing, are removed from their unconscious object. Here are the cordials, the props, the pillows, so eagerly sought, so sedulously applied but one hour since—could they stay the hand of death? could they arrest the spirit as it flitted from us, one instant? Perhaps this sentiment occurred to the marquis; for, when next he spoke, he said to the servants who now re-entered—"Remove these things from the bed; let all be made decent, orderly—stay, leave his gauds and toys, that we may fancy, when we look upon them, he is still with us," added the marquis very hurriedly, and quitting the room to conceal his tears.

He walked into his library, where no

one was permitted on any pretext to enter; for his heart was heavy, and the ingratitude and misconduct of the living pressed far more poignantly than the aspect of the dead; and the old man, alone, with nought but his Creator for his witness, shed tears, not of pity, but of anguish, for they were wrung from him by the ingratitude of a son. "Would he had died thus! young! innocent! before my heart had learned to dread him! whilst yet his safety hereafter was sure!" exclaimed the marquis, clasping his hands. "Had he died like thee, innocent one! many an hour of anguish I had been spared!"

He stopped short, the door opened, and Lord Glamorgan stood before his father. "And, what now?" was the marquis's exclamation, as he turned, his voice calm, his air lofty. "Hast thou aught to-day to gibe thy aged father with? Keep thine own counsels; I seek not to enter into them."

"Your lordship is severe," replied Lord Glamorgan, bending low.

"And thou, son, art rapacious," returned the marquis, haughtily; "what be thy designs that they must be ever accompanied by large demands on *my* treasury, I know not. Go to! see that thy foot on

the ladder be well placed ere thou ascend."

"Of that," answered Lord Glamorgan, his eye sparkling, and his voice loud, "I am secure, if I have money. Why withhold thou from me what is needful for the King's exigences? Is it loyal?—is it dutiful?—is it just?"

"Glamorgan,"—the marquis rang a little bell, which stood upon the table, as he spoke,—"I dare not confer with thee alone. Why comest thou to Ragland with forty or fifty armed retainers, to intimidate thy old father?"

The marquis's voice was raised to a pitch very unusual in his calm deportment; but it was calmed in an instant—the presiding good genius of the family, Lady Arundel, entered. The son and father, as if rebuked by her presence, were subdued and mute.

"And what," asked Lady Arundel, gently, "is the topic of this dire contention? Alas! my lords, as I descended the grand staircase, I heard voices high in dispute. Glamorgan, hast *thou* provoked it?"

"No, madam," returned Glamorgan, who, perceiving that his father was overcome, gave loose to his fiery and selfish

temper. "But the King's service, the honour of our family, my engagements and bonds, demand assistance. I *must* have money."

"Then take it!" exclaimed the marquis, throwing the keys of his treasury towards Glamorgan; "take those; help thyself, and beggar thy father!"

"I crave pardon—I was wrong—I was undutiful; I pray for grace," cried Glamorgan, bending one knee to the ground. "I ought not to have said the word *must*; it was uttered before I thought of it."

"O, my lord," returned the marquis, loftily, "'tis a proper word, a mighty proper word, in thy condition; and whilst thou hast so many swords by thy side, 'tis an expedient word. I have no command of my house, whilst thou hast so many officers in it; nor am I at my own dispose whilst thou hast so many commanders here."

"My lord," replied Glamorgan, who now saw that his point, which was to obtain a larger grant of money than he had ever received, was not to be carried against the kind-hearted and intrepid marquis by force, "I meant them not to stay here: they shall go forthwith."

"Mighty well, son, mighty well, that they should," replied the marquis, walking to and fro, and drawing his majestic figure to its full height; "but have a care that *must* do not stay behind; and despatch them all at your earliest convenience, I pray ye! My poor house is not large enough to hold any troops save my own; let them be cleared out ere night-fall, I beseech you, son Glamorgan."

"You are hard upon him, my lord," observed Lady Arundel, as Glamorgan, meekly bowing, withdrew. "'Tis not seemly to use such abundant, nay unkind reproof."

"Think you so, sister?" returned the marquis, his voice subsiding into its bland and customary tone. "I have been chafed, I own. But hark ye! If my son be dejected, I can raise him up when I please: but it is a question, if *he* take a-head, whether I could ever bring him lower when I list. Glamorgan was not used to proffer such courtship unto me. And I believe, in my heart, he intended a better word for his father; but *must* is for the king to use. What tidings bringeth he of Blanch? Now that my choler is cooled, my heart burneth to them who have never injured

me. And yet, and yet, my sister, the disobedient child is oftentimes nearest to his parent's heart, still."

The marquis sat down, and some bitter tears started to his eyes. "Glamorgan's ambition is boundless," he said, after a pause, in a low tone, to Lady Arundel; "he aimeth to be generalissimo of the King's forces in Ireland—a fearful post for one who hath neither talents in war, nor discretion in peace. He aimeth at high alliances; he trusteth to build up the power of our family—I tremble to say it—upon the decline of our Royal Master's greatness."

"Is it credible? Can that be?" asked Lady Arundel.

"Ay! and should a pebble chance to fall upon the path of his greatness, he will crush it. Should I be in his eyes that pebble, he would not spare even his old father's honour in his career."

"God knows," said Lady Arundel; "God alone knows the heart of man. I tremble not for ourselves, here; but think you our Blanch is safe, placed under the guidance, nay, perchance, control of Glamorgan's partizans at Oxford? My mind misgives me. 'Tis many weeks since I heard from her; then she was

well, and content, save in respect to absence from her kinsfolk."

The marquis heard these remarks without reply, for the father reflected, and justly, that it was not for him to add another suspicion to the dark hints against Glamorgan's character, which he had thus, in confidence, imparted to his sister. His heart still doated upon the vain, the selfish, the subtle, but fascinating, Glamorgan; and already the father's heart, stung with unreasonable remorse for his previous violence, yearned towards the object with whom he had but recently been too justly incensed.

"I think not so ill of Glamorgan, sister," he answered captiously. "He is not all evil as thou art prone to suppose—and thou wert ever apt to prejudge him. He will do the child no hurt; yet, if thy mind misgive thee, why not send for Edward Herbert? Summon Blanch homeward—provided the Queen will let her come; and place the saucy girl under the best of all protection—in these, ay, and in less perilous times—that of a loving husband."

"And yet," muttered Lady Arundel thoughtfully—

"—And yet? 'Tis not time for yet,

sister Arundel. Herbert is a proper man, and a good;—what exceptions can the child make to him? They have been coupled together since childhood; they have had abundant time to know and to love each other; 'tis a thing agreed, writ in the book of fate, settled by contract—wherefore now delay it? Wherefore give in to the fancies of a wilful, and—if I must needs say it, sister, and without offence—spoiled girl?"

The marquis spoke with an unwonted degree of irritation; for the vexations of a father's heart embitter all the other relations of life, inferior in their power over the affections, and incomparably light in our estimation when compared with that which holds of all others the most tenacious grasp upon our "heart of hearts."

"She must be sent for," replied Lady Arundel, after some moments' reflection, "and speedily; as for Edward—" She was interrupted by some person opening the door of the library at this moment. She turned, and Edward Herbert stood before her.

He was in a suit of armour, fully armed, and, as he entered, an attendant took from his shoulders a riding-cloak, and received from the trembling hands of the

young knight a light helmet, the removal of which showed the disheveled locks, and the brow of the young man, already marked by some lines of care. He bent one knee to the ground before the marquis, and kissed passionately, and with much emotion, the hands which were extended to raise him up.

“Thy blessing also! dear Lady Arundel,—Mother! as I was wont to call thee!” exclaimed Edward, turning to Lady Arundel, “for in truth I want all that—” he broke off suddenly, and resumed in a calmer accent, “I have ridden here very hastily, our quarters being, for the time, on Lansdown, to see you, my Lady Arundel, and my Lord of Worcester—to—to say to ye, that my contract with your kinswoman is dissolved by her—by our consent; to pray ye to believe that in this I have done nothing dishonourable; that I have consulted her wishes, her happiness, her affections—” he stopped short: his voice sank to a whisper, and, turning hastily away, the young soldier paced the chamber to and fro in great agitation.

“I thought it would come to this!” exclaimed Lady Arundel, pale with emotion. “A dark fate hangs over our

house! There is death in it, Herbert. Yes, the young child is taken from his mother! happy! innocent! happier than those that are left to buffet with destiny."

These words produced a change in the excited mind of Herbert, who bent down his head, subdued and awe-struck.

"And is he then dead?" exclaimed Herbert, after a pause. "I blush that I have dwelt with unseemly violence on that matter which hath troubled me, whilst they have had this heavier sorrow. Poor Arundel! unhappy Lady Cecily! commend me to them in all courtesy, in all sorrow. I have but this to add," he resumed with much agitation as he stood before the amazed and scarcely less agitated marquis.—"I have but this to add, for time presseth. Do me this kindness—there be certain forms," he sighed as he spoke, "needful in our Church to undo the contract that has been formally attested—that contract is destroyed. I have restored it to Blanch. But here" he drew from his bosom a paper as he spoke, "is a petition, necessary, as I am told, to obtain a dispensation for broken vows. In the hurry of war, in the tumults of these times, I may

—I must omit all matters of private concern. Enforce, my lord marquis, graciously enforce this petition by your powerful influence, and release your kinswoman from her bonds.”

“This hath been then agreed between ye both?” asked the marquis sternly.

“It hath; and we *both* desire our liberty,” replied Edward, with firmness, whilst he looked manfully, but calmly, at the nobleman whom he addressed.

“—What!” exclaimed Lady Arundel, coming forward,—“have you, then, ceased to prefer my poor Blanch to all others? Is your early liking, Sir Edward Herbert,—enforced as it was by duty,—all dispelled? Hath some fairer,—nay, I cannot think it,—some richer beauty driven the bride destined for you by those who sought but your welfare, from all remembrance?”

“Is the honour of our family not to be considered in the matter at all?” asked Lord Worcester indignantly.

“Perchance, new-born distinctions, ambition, royal favour, may have turned thy brain, Sir Edward,” said Lady Arundel kindly, yet with a formality not customary in her manner to her favourite Edward. “Have the courtesy to reply to—to—. Answer me at once:—Is it

thine own wish to dissolve the contract, or alone her folly, her wilfulness, who hath brought many a sorrow to my heart?"

"Madam, it is even so. Think not I mean to urge indifference"—the youth's voice trembled as he uttered the word—"to her whom I could have cherished as fondly as ever the heart of any whom she prefers to me will or can do.—No! in honest affection I will yield to none!—but she loves me not!—Blame her not!" he exclaimed, extending his hands, for both Lord Worcester and his sister were eager to speak.—"She hath acted nobly, honourably; and I thank her for saving me from a lot I could ill have borne"—an union with one whose heart has long been in the possession of another; he was about to say—but he checked himself, for he was too high-minded to betray, even to justify himself, the confidence of Blanch,—“whose heart is not and never will be mine!”

“—But cannot our counsels, cannot our entreaties?” Lady Arundel began—

“Cannot our commands, sister, rather say,” interposed the marquis, angrily.—“Tush!—what a perverse and rebellious generation is this!”

“—My time here is brief; I pray ye

hear me," cried Edward Herbert, impetuously; but in a moment he was calm, and a lofty determination sat upon his brow when he again spoke; and the experienced eye of the marquis, and the partial observation of Lady Arundel, might well perceive the future hero of an unprospering cause, the still more noble sufferer in a long exile, in the youth to whose countenance high-toned feelings and high resolves lent the dignity and gave the interest of maturer age.

"Hear me," he resumed, in a grave firm tone.—"I wish this to be dissolved. Yes, it is my wish; for, in spite of my demerits,—again do I repeat it,—I hold myself in too high estimation to be married from a sense of duty, of obligation." He paused, and a bitter smile played for an instant upon his countenance. "It was, on the first disclosure, a disappointment, not devoid of much poignancy; for my heart, my hopes, my earliest, my last affections, were bound up in this contract!" —He placed the petition on a table before him as he spoke.—"Permit me to say thus much of my past feelings, and pardon me that I say no more, for I am imperatively called hence: In respect to the honour I conceived must and would

attach to any far inferior house from an alliance with the noble Somersets, let me say thus much: I should have deemed more of that honour and alliance had my affections been less warm."

"I believe thee, and I fully comprehend," cried the marquis; "yet why, since thy young heart hath been engaged in this matter, wherefore give it up?"

"—Why not wait, and hope, and let me plead thy cause, Edward?" asked Lady Arundel.

"Never! No, madam, all weak regrets are over. I have combated them, and with success; and there are higher purposes in a man's life than to wait upon the pleasure, or to woo the fantasies of a wayward heart."—The young soldier spoke with cheerfulness and emphasis.—"I love my profession of arms—I honour my sovereign—and if my poor services can but avail him one hundredth part that my affections desire, I shall be amply recompensed by such return. Besides, madam, if the Somersets be esteemed proud, the Herberts are not mean-spirited, and I should despise myself if I could descend to sue to one who spurns me from her!" He drew from his vest a small case as he spoke, and put it hastily

in the hands of Lady Arundel.—“ Why should I longer speak upon a theme which must ever be painful to me?—That is her picture; give it back to her, madam—it may be reserved for a happier suitor. I shall ever, believe me,” added the young man—his voice softened as he spoke—“ love the memory of those features which I must hope no more to behold.—My kindest wishes will follow her whom I must ever love, respect, regret.” He tore himself from the arms of Lady Arundel and Lord Worcester, who rushed forward to embrace him as he spoke, and, hastily quitting them, departed as speedily as possible from the castle.

The brother and sister were again left together. This new misfortune, this fresh act of disobedience and insanity, as the marquis termed it, were overwhelming; and even Lady Arundel could not forbear from uttering some expressions of bitter resentment against Blanch.

CHAPTER VI.

I do love

My country's good, with a respect more tender,
More holy, and profound, than mine own life.

Coriolanus.

IN times of great emergency, private vexations, however pungent, soon sink, even in the estimation of the sufferers, beneath the heavy pressure of public calamities,—and sorrows, and terrors such as she had never contemplated, drove, ere long, even the misconduct of Blanch from the recollection of Lady Arundel.

England, devastated as she had been, was yielding rapidly to the demoralization which attends the steps of factious troubles. The high resolves, the pure patriotism, the admirable loyalty with which both parties had set out on their troublous career, had been sadly tarnished by the collision of jarring interests. A universal distrust prevailed between the chiefs of the parliamentary leaders.

“There were not two of them,” observes Lord Clarendon, “who had entire confidence in each other, or who durst communicate their thoughts together.” And the debates upon the Self-denying Ordinance—a measure chiefly contrived for the dishonour and destruction of the Earl of Essex, had raised so many jealousies and imparted such terrors, that even those who were the best disposed to that incomparable general, and well-intentioned nobleman, were obliged to adopt so much caution, that there could be but little confidence entertained in their fidelity.

On the King’s side, affairs were even in a worse condition. Bitter feuds distracted the council of war, especially since Rupert, popular among the soldiery, but disliked by the officers, had been made its general. For the Prince was too imperious and too passionate to endure debate, and had the fault, less common to Englishmen than to foreigners, of loving any measure proposed according to the partiality which he might entertain for those who proposed it; and, with all his talents as a commander; with, perhaps, the most disinterested motives of any man who fought for Charles;—with the purest affection for

his royal uncle; endowed as he was with chivalric valour—the Prince, perhaps, conduced more greatly to the downfall of his sovereign by his imprudences, his temper, and his unlicensed indulgence to the excesses of the soldiery, than even the powerful talents of Cromwell, or the personal character and skilful generalship of the admired, and in many points admirable, Fairfax.

The Court was not in much better temper than the army. “Those who had no preferment were angry with those who had; they,” continues Clarendon, “who were envied, found no satisfaction or delight in what they were envied for, being poor and necessitous;”—so that Charles had little credit in the titles and honours which he conferred upon his grasping courtiers, and found, to his sorrow, that pleasing one man by his elevation to the peerage displeased a hundred. Harassed and embarrassed, there were moments when Charles, in the security of his Court at Oxford longed for the tumults of the camp—for the excitements which drove the future from his thoughts.

It was at this juncture of the King's affairs, that there arose one of those

master-spirits which seemed to be alternately granted by fate to either contending party, and destined to arrest the progress of the opposing side. To the command of the Oxford Horse had succeeded George Goring, who was appointed upon the dismissal of Wilmot, Earl of Rochester—the father, and, in all that could disgrace the name of Wilmot, a worthy progenitor of that hapless Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, of whose agonizing penitence Burnet has left a touching and eloquent picture—a scene of death-bed contrition traced by a powerful hand, and carrying awe and conviction even to the most callous heart. Wilmot had signalized his career by a reckless debauchery; and, like his son, the inspiration of wit threw over his vices a fatal charm:—the example of Goring was not more likely than that of his predecessors to redeem the character of a Cavalier from those aspersions which now too justly attached to the adherents of Charles; for the licentiousness which mounted to its height during the reign of Charles the Second, was undoubtedly sown among the parents and relatives of those younger nobility who have gained so ignominious a preeminence in our history, by the dis-

orders, the temptations, the wandering life, the conviviality and often guilty companionships of civil war.

Of the Cavalier tribe, such as those of the opposite faction esteemed and described the character, George Goring, the eldest son of a distinguished royalist, and afterwards Earl of Norwich, was a marked specimen. His understanding was of the highest order; his wit of that gay and gross description which the presence of danger, and the animating accidents of a busy career, tend to sharpen. His courage was dauntless, and was accompanied by a singular presence of mind in danger; his thirst for conquest arose from a love of military distinction, yet it could be checked by his over-mastering passion—a love of pleasure; and the pursuit of an intrigue, or the indulgence of a preference,—guilty of course, for it is supposed he never knew one innocent or honourable feeling—could arrest the hero of England, the darling of the Cavaliers, in the most successful course, or render him indifferent to the most threatening perils. For the rest—to sum up his character in few words—Goring valued not his promise, his professions, nor any rules of honour, nor of integrity,

one iota ; not a single scruple of religion ever startled him, or stopped, even for an instant, a breach of trust, or an act of treachery ; he loved no man so well that he would not deceive him, were it expedient so to do ; and, of all his qualities, dissimulation was his masterpiece : to this was added an ambition uncontrolled by any fear, either of God or man.

Such was the individual to whom Lady Carlisle first, and afterwards by her instigators, Lord Glamorgan and Panzani, destined the innocent Blanch ; lovely in her purity, unconscious of sin, but placed within the power of the designing by the misgivings of a conscientious mind, by the workings of extreme—we dare not, in our blindness, to call them mistaken—opinions. The scheme, so deep in its contrivance, so remorseless in its construction and conduct, was accelerated by the domestic circumstances of General Goring ; for a law-suit, long pending between him and his wife, Lady Lettice Goring, had just been terminated, their marriage had been annulled—and Goring was free to form a fresh choice. He was a Roman Catholic, and, as Lord Glamorgan conceived, likely to rise to the first

honours of the state, could the leaky vessel of monarchy be kept floating upon the troubled waters, and the storm of rebellion once be overpast.

"Thou hast strictly examined into the state of her feelings—thou hast plied her well with thy spiritual instructions—the soil is prepared—the ground is ready for the seed—she repenteth her of her criminal love?" asked Lady Carlisle one day of Panzani.

"—And seeketh to atone for it by acts of penitence, and an amended life," said Panzani, raising his eyes to heaven.

"—Hum! you, holy father, and your brethren, hold a magic influence over our feminine natures," — Lady Carlisle spoke with a sneer; for her faith was of the dubious kind which hard natures can alone conceive: vain of her talents, this intriguing, faithless worldling had become what is called philosophical—a dangerous attribute to woman, whose reasonings are seldom dispassionate, whose knowledge has the imperfections, and the evil tendencies which are the usual result of a deficient education. Inwardly the faded beauty, whose political influence, like her personal charms, was decaying, distrusted, and even despised, religious professions; but

they had their uses ; religion she deemed a capital state engine, Christianity a capital code of morals — good for the uneducated, and a resource for those who were weary of one excitement, and might conveniently betake themselves to another.

Lady Carlisle was promenading, muffled in furs, round the ramparts. There had been a cessation of hostilities ; an ominous tranquillity prevailed over the adjacent country ; the garrison was comparatively at rest ; General Goring was waiting at Oxford until the signal for a fresh campaign should be issued — and Oxford, for the last time, rejoiced in the transient gaieties and splendour of a court.

Panzani walked deferentially by the countess's side. There is ever something melancholy in seeing the abasement of learning, and especially when it adorns the priesthood of any Christian persuasion, beneath the influence of power. Meekly the Jesuit wrapped his spare frame in the flowing garments of his order, and trod as if he feared to leave the print of his foot upon the ramparts : yet, what burning wishes for ascendancy, what extended views of spiritual dominion, what a conscious superiority of intellect and knowledge were concealed beneath that

pensive and almost supplicating demeanour!

"Hast thou ever loved?" asked Lady Carlisle, turning round suddenly towards the Jesuit as they walked along.

"I—" the priest changed colour, the inquiry was so abrupt; he raised his eyes to the calm heavens, and, drawing from his bosom a crucifix, pressed it to his lips.

"—True, such is thy profession; but before thou didst pledge those vows which gave thee to thy holy order, body and soul, and to heaven," pursued Lady Carlisle, checking the saucy boldness of her manner, and looking with hypocritical gravity at the wan face of Panzani? There was an expression on that countenance that rebuked her instantly; it was calm, but determined; and the shrewd inquirer dared not to repeat her question.

"I only meant," she resumed laughingly, "to say that those dim and chastened remembrances of former times might aid thee, Father, in thy mastery over this perverse heart of Mistress Blanch; also, I propound to thee a question—Hast thou observed my Lord Lindesay?"

"As how?" inquired Panzani.

"Thinkest thou his interest in that

damsel is *all* friendly? Believest thou in such vain assertions as would lead us to suppose it *possible* that the young, and the fair, and the gallant, can be content with those calm friendships they pretend to? Absurd! but let me hear how stand matters, now, touching Mistress Blanch; by my troth! the sooner she is parted from my Lord Lindesay the better will prosper our designs, and her true interest. 'Tis but for her benefit we act."

"Most true," replied Panzani. "Her aunt, Lady Arundel, whose zeal for the faith is not such as *I* can commend, hath summoned her to Ragland. Since your ladyship desires to couple her with General Goring —"

"— Since *I* desire? Holy Father! 'tis not alone *my* scheme!"

"I grant it; and, indeed, vain were it to compass any designs without your ladyship's powerful aid. First, with respect to Lord Lindesay, methought his regrets and affections were entombed with —"

"— Folly!" exclaimed Lady Carlisle; "Believest *thou* in buried affections? Dost *thou* not know that they ever spring up from beneath the green sod like the herbs and flowers that garnish the grave be-

neath?" cried Lady Carlisle impatiently; "and yet," she resumed, "whilst Lord Lindesay remains here,—and he will never quit his majesty,—there will be little hope for Goring, for he will put her on her guard, Father;—understandest thou? But I must be at my duties ere three o'clock. 'Tis a thankless task, a wearisome undertaking, this that my Lord Glamorgan imposeth," she added, as she descended from the ramparts, and, kissing her hand to Panzani, entered a litter which awaited her within the walls. "We will discourse more of this anon," she cried out, as she drew the curtain of her litter only partially around her, so as to give a becoming perspective to her reclining figure.

There was still a remnant of state in Lady Carlisle's equipage, though the conveyance was old and shattered, and had been,—for it belonged to one of the colleges,—some time appropriated to the service of the wounded officers, who were conveyed from the ramparts to their lodgings. Several footmen, whose silver gardings and badges were tarnished by long wearing, walked before and behind the countess, as she leaned gracefully upon a cushion, and received the homage of the young Oxonians as she passed. And many a

youthful face glowed beneath the trencher, and many a bright eye sparkled, as the celebrated countess condescended to bow, or kiss the tips of her jeweled glove ; for the students of the University were too young not to admire a gracious beauty of middle age ; they had not arrived at that discerning and fastidious era when men are peculiarly conscious of the arts and airs of by-gone beauty.

Lady Carlisle's litter stopped, whilst she returned the greetings of a tall and portly officer on horseback, who was riding down the High Street, attended by a party of military ;—whilst fair heads peeped from the windows, acclamations rang through the streets, handkerchiefs were waved ; and the officer turned a pair of fine dark eyes to the right and to the left, and received, with a sort of rough courtesy, these marks of popularity. When this idol of the Oxonians smiled, the whitest of teeth gave indications of that sound, unbroken constitution, which not even the wildest excesses nor the greatest fatigues had hitherto impaired : when he was grave, a look of contempt, an air of defiance marked his features, which were regularly handsome, but large, and presented what is often called a caricature of

beauty. His figure was powerful, and even majestic; and he wore a suit of armour with the same ease as another man would have carried on his shoulders a velvet mantle. The person of General Goring—for so the cheers of the bystanders soon proclaimed him—was ponderous; his features were harsh; but his voice was soft and low; his manners, when he chose to please, were gentle even to obsequiousness.

“—So you are here, general? I heard as much,” cried Lady Carlisle, returning the officer’s low bow with a gracious bend of her head. “You are come to a miserable place, wretched, almost insufferable. A court without courtiers, a treasury without money, soldiers with but a scanty provision of arms;—and just a handful of provincial belles to grace our halls, without so much as a scruple of beauty amongst them.”

“Ay!” said General Goring, whom she thus addressed; and, dismounting from his horse, and giving it to one of his attendants, he walked by the side of Lady Carlisle’s litter. “Ay! but I am not surprised that your ladyship can see no face worth looking at save when you are before a mirror.”

"There is but one," said Lady Carlisle, returning his compliment with a slight bow,—“as arrant a coquette as ever trod a Measure, who swears she never loved a man in her whole existence—a girl indifferently fair; I would that you, my dear Goring, could reduce her pride, and teach her what it is to sigh—to sue—to be forsaken. You shall see her to-night at the banquet. They talk of dancing and such revels! The lay fellows are forced to stand up in Merton hall, for lack of other partners, for some dozen or two of burgesses' daughters, whom the powers that be must needs conciliate. 'Tis a dangerous place, this royal court; mighty attractive and distractive. I myself was asked by a Doctor of the canon law, who had read an oration to King James, and was old enough to be my father, to shake my foot with him in a brawl!”

“Your ladyship throws your wit about as usual. I am mightily chagrined, nevertheless, to hear that there is nought to solace this miserable time of leisure. God grant it may not endure long, and that we may soon be at the rebels again.”

“Amen! Anything, *mon cher* Goring, but this wretched, half-starved town, with our prayer-going King,—our Queen

in the vapours, bishops without a diocese, churchmen, who, for once, must be disinterested, for they may go whistle for preferment; but the worst is, as you say, to see but a handful of women, and those as vulgar, and as ordinary, as—by all the saints in the calendar! there stands, Goring, in yon lattice, one foot planted on the balcony, the only beauty—*beauty!* as they call her, of Oxford; a girl of some condition, yet of a younger branch; no match worth thinking of for the gay and brave—a younger son's daughter—John Somerset," she whispered, "whose wife—you remember?"

"—Perfectly," replied Goring, on looking up. "She will not have a groat, that's certain: now, for my part, a wife without a dower, is like unto a king without a kingdom."

"Why I fancied you had had enough of heiresses," interrupted Lady Carlisle, who had now some time alighted from her litter, and was threading her way among the then narrow streets of Oxford which led to Merton—"just, from curiosity, and to say, that thou hast seen *La Blanche*," added Lady Carlisle, "stand here, for a moment, Goring, and look up at yon lattice—there, where the ivy is blown aside

somewhat, and the spray waves to and fro. She 's too slender, methinks ; her nose not altogether straight, the brow too high, the skin too pale and pearly ; she hath lost her bloom," continued the countess, beginning, from a deep-laid scheme, to depreciate the fair girl whom she wished to barter to the profligate Goring, but ending with the true zeal and malignity of a former beauty, to whom every blemish in the young and fair was not an unwelcome discovery.

Goring was riveted to the spot whereon he stood ; he took a long and minute survey of the unconscious Blanch. A furred mantle hung across her shoulders, and concealed, indeed, the slight and supple figure, scarcely then at its full height, but the face shrouded, yet not hidden, by a dark hood—the fair hand and gloveless arm were fully manifested to the gaze of one who was unworthy to look upon beauty and innocence ; for he viewed them as the bird of prey views the fluttering and powerless skylark ; he looked on that youth and loveliness and purity with the gross approbation of a sensual mind, not with the high and romantic elevation of an enthusiastic but honest reverence that men of delicacy and virtue feel for

woman. Crafty, as she who stood beside him, Goring, however, admired in silence, and turned from the contemplation of the thoughtful Blanch with well assumed indifference.

“She is fair—to those,” and Goring turned to Lady Carlisle as he spoke, “who can forget *one* face. I may find more to criticise to-night at the revels; her kinsfolk have done well to fasten Mistress Somerset upon the service of the Queen; some decayed bedchamber-lord, perchance some worn-out secretary, may take a penniless girl for the sake of her great connexions; a better lot for La Blanche than a Welsh esquire, or a pragmatistical country knight;—I will attend your ladyship to the revels to-night.”

“If thou wilt in truth carry off the present toast of the city,” whispered Lady Carlisle, as she retreated, “let me tell thee, there is a talk of one Sidney Godolphin who had been a suitor to her, or she to him (for I protest the fashion of things is altered now, and women pursue men). Mind,—Godolphin;—’tis he—he who hath of late been so much the theme of discourse, get him sent to the North—to Berwick—or some where—”

“Yes, or to Basing,” returned Goring,

“more at hand, and more certain; for the Marquis of Winchester prayeth for relief to the Fort,—and *his* relief must be death to many.”

General Goring kissed the hand of the countess as she entered the college; and, retiring, declared he was going to kill an hour at shovel-board somewhere. It wanted just one half hour of noon; yet the chimes of Merton chapel were ringing forth a mass tune, ere Goring, stationed beneath the walls of the garden, withdrew from his stedfast reconnoitre of one whose thoughts were far distant from the the concerns of Oxford; and the general, starting from his post of observation, remembered that he was constrained to ride to Abingdon at noon, that day.

There was an influx of strangers into Oxford that night; and the Queen's drawing-room at Merton was attended by an unusual number of persons; for it was generally understood, that, in a few weeks, even the remnant of state which was still maintained at Oxford would be abandoned. Charles, upon the conclusion of the treaty of Uxbridge, from which no important results had been expected, was to take the field in person; Henrietta to withdraw to France, for a price was fixed

upon her head; the inquisition for blood had been issued! and the Queen, distracted by her apprehensions, and now on the eve of giving birth to another child, was wretched until she could leave a country, every association with which was turned to bitterness.

The King, on the contrary, was cheerful; not in the wild, forced spirits which Henrietta deemed it expedient at times to assume; but in that calm temper which a consciousness of good intention maintains. Whatever were the errors of his conduct, whatever the miseries which an ill-advised career brought upon his people, Charles ever believed that he had acted for the best. Self deceived,—he was therefore tranquil; and to others he was equally lenient in his judgments: not a resentful expression was known to pass his lips; and in the midst of enemies,—for, even in his own court, there were many who could not be deemed friends,—surrounded by snares, betrayed eventually, the King, Christian as he was, knew not the bitter misery of a revengeful spirit.

That night, a pleased expression lighted up the features of Charles, and formed a marked contrast to the fretful melan-

choly which ever and anon filled the dark eyes of Henrietta with tears. For the King had received again several former adherents, who had but waited until the tide of fortune turned against him to repair to his standard; he had extended his forgiveness to friends and partizans who had returned to their allegiance from a thorough disgust towards the proceedings of that party, who had now driven the more moderate of the Parliamentarians from power. These—among whom several have been specified by historians—had hastened to enrol themselves under the royal standard when they saw that the cause of monarchy was failing. They braved the sneers, the opprobrium, which accompany any who change the direction of their path of public life. They were, for the most part, men of hasty tempers, and of speculative opinions upon whose stability little reliance could be placed: but amongst them there was one exception,—Sidney Godolphin; he still maintained his adherence to the cause which he had, as some thought, rashly espoused. “We must make allowances for the influence of early associations; he is of a loyal race; we must not be vain-glorious; we must not

take the merit of his re-conversion to our own deeds," the King had observed to James Stuart, when his majesty was informed that Sidney Godolphin had joined his majesty's troops as a volunteer.

"I hate a renegade," was the stern Scot's reply, whilst a muscle of his paste-board countenance moved not, "and if Godolphin hath heard the censures which are passed upon him, 'twill do him good."

"Thou comest of a merciless nation," replied the King, smiling. "The Scottish men cannot pardon an error. Thou art an honest man, James, and I believe thou wouldst die for me," added Charles, smiling, the instant afterwards, and extending his hand to his kinsman.

"— I would, an please your majesty," replied the chamberlain, with an inflexible wooden countenance that produced a laugh among the young courtiers to whom the unbending Scot was a mark — behind his back — for ridicule. Yet James Stuart kept his word; and when his Royal Master's head was doomed to the block, solicited parliament, with a sincerity and vehemence that wrung the heart of him whom he sought to save, — to die in his master's stead!

“ Sidney Godolphin would not show himself among our court beauties at the banquet, when he was in Oxford,” said Lady Carlisle to Lord Lindesay; “ I presume he hath not left his locks to grow, or he hath not lost the nasal twang of the psalm tunes, or he — ”

“ — He likes not the converse of foppish men, or of frivolous women, perchance,” returned Lord Lindesay, with a petulance quite unusual in him.

“ O, my lord! there is a damsel here he would not have been unwilling to exchange some amorous love-compliments withal,” replied Lady Carlisle, fixing her once lustrous eyes upon the fine countenance of one whom she commonly feared; but, incited to courage by the suspicion that one weakness—a very weakness in the great Lindesay—had fastened itself, with parasitic force, and clung to his noble heart (and how valiant we become when we detect a foible in the grave and great); “ He affected Mistress Blanch,” added the countess, putting her fan before her face and whispering over Lord Lindesay’s shoulder, which she could just reach.

“ How knowest thou? Who hath revealed Godolphin’s secrets?” returned

Lord Lindesay gravely, looking full at the countess.

"Ay, and she loveth *him*!" pursued the countess maliciously, "I know from one who hath had certain proof—"

"—Panzani?"

"Fie, my lord! Can a confessor break his vow of secrecy? *Can* he do it? Is there not a supernatural force which ever restrains him from so doing?" asked the countess, her features expressing that shrewd incredulity and contempt which the worldly entitle discernment.

"Your ladyship knows best; I am no Papist," replied Lord Lindesay, turning away his head.

"I am so chagrined if I have said ought to vex your lordship—" Lady Carlisle began.

"—All honest men must be vexed, my lady, when they see a beauty and a wit pervert her charms and her talents to the purposes of idle gossip, or of fruitless intrigue. Pardon me! I have no concern with Godolphin's secrets, nor shall I—nor will I countenance the rumour that hath been set afloat by some one, that it is love, and not honour, that hath wrought his conversion to our cause." Lord Lindesay arose from the table and

walked away as he spoke. His lofty demeanour, his fearless character, had some influence even over the arrogant and dangerous Lady Carlisle, whom he had known from his infancy. She looked gravely after him for a moment. In a short time he returned to her side.

“What means her majesty,” he said, in a low tone, “by commanding her young and innocent attendant to dance with every idle gallant that sues for her hand? Is it intended to make a barter of this young creature’s charms? Why link her in the measure to Jermyn, or nigh to Goring, whose known licentiousness of character—”

“—And why so jealous of the young lady’s reputation?” asked Lady Carlisle archly, “I never saw you jealous before, —but once.”

Lord Lindesay gave her a stern, rebuking look. “It would be but decorous, my Lady Carlisle,” he said, sighing, as he bent his eyes upon her, “not to revert to that in which you bore so inconsistent a part. No matter, that affair is buried in the grave! But let not another victim to your manœuvres revive the remembrance, which not all the miseries of these later years,” Lord Lin-

desay raised his voice as he spoke, "can wipe away."

"My lord, you will be overheard," said Lady Carlisle hurriedly.

"It is not for *me* to fear being overheard," replied Lord Lindesay. "But there is no fear—no fear! the tenants of Merton hall are intent on their intrigues, their interests, their pleasures of the hour; they heed us not!"

"It will be as well if we are not seen conversing too much together, my lord!" exclaimed Lady Carlisle tremulously, for at that instant Lord Glamorgan entered the room, and he was of a faction that distrusted and detested the honest Lindesay.

CHAPTER VII.

Words are easy as the wind ;
Faithful friends are hard to find ;
He that is thy friend indeed,
He will help thee at *thy* need.

SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnets*.

It was evening. The hall of Christ-church was thronged with noblemen and officers, pacing up and down, awaiting their introduction into the Presence-chamber; and long did they murmur in that vast hall, for the King was viewing the works and ramparts, and, although noted for punctuality, had delayed returning to the college.

At length, however, the clamorous voices of the impatient courtiers were suddenly silenced: there was an intimation that his majesty had arrived, and that the Presence-chamber would be shortly opened. Ere that subdued and conscious feeling, which the proximity of royalty produces at the first blush, had subsided, a lady of middle age, clad in a furred mantle, masked, and attended by two

gentlewomen, moved with a hasty, though stately, step through the crowd of suitors. The throng divided, and had allowed her to pass, for all knew that she was the illustrious and unfortunate Isabel, Marchioness of Winchester, whose husband had been now, for more than two years, besieged in Basing House.

The lady passed on, and, issuing by a door at the corner of the hall, entered a paneled chamber where Charles sat beneath the cloth of estate: she sank on her knees before him.

"Rise, Lady Winchester," said the King kindly; "we know thy suit; we know thy merit, and thy lord's loyal affection. Goring," pursued his majesty, turning to his general of Horse, "this lady, who is not inferior even to the famed Blanch of Arundel in heroic qualities, cometh to sue that we would, on sallying forth, (as thou knowest," continued the King, in a whisper, "we purpose to do,) make Basing in our way, and relieve it. What thinkest thou, Goring?"

"Sire," interposed the marchioness, with deep deference, yet not without dignity—for the sister of Lord Essex, the sister of Hertford, was endowed with the lofty qualities which both, so differently

engaged, yet manifested,—“Sire, my lord writeth to me that he cannot hold out ten days; and he importuneth your majesty to provide for his relief, and not to let a place from which the rebels have received so much prejudice fall into their hands.”

“—Add to which,” said the King, looking appealingly at Goring, “that it lieth in our way,—scarcely forty miles hence.”

“—And is so closely begirt,” cried the marchioness, clasping her hands.

“We will submit it, madam, to the council,” replied Charles graciously, “and will take this business to heart. This remindeth me,” added the King, looking fixedly at the receding figure of the marchioness as she retired, “that the motto of Lord Winchester’s colours is similar to that which *I* adopted” (the King, as if by forgetfulness, spoke in the first person) “at my coronation.” There was a dash of melancholy in the royal countenance, as Charles thus referred to that event which had been the prelude of little real happiness, and of much bitter suffering to him on whose anointed head the crown had then been placed. “*‘Donec pax redit terris,’*” muttered the mo-

narch. "Well! James, how many more suits and suitors to-night? I am weary: will they not tarry until to-morrow? We shall not depart until this day se'nnight. Can I not have some converse with those from whom I am so soon to part? Let me be a king indeed, for once, and grant me, my friend, but one hour or so free from ceremonial. Come, James, pr'ythee none of thy ifs and wherefores!" — and Charles arose as he spoke, and, pushing back the tapestry from the wall, opened a concealed door, and, saying to Goring, "Come, and look on the treasures I am to leave to thee," passed into another apartment.

The Princess Elizabeth was playing on the lute, whilst beside her stood her preceptress, Lady Leicester, from whose highly-cultured mind the young Elizabeth had received that extraordinary tone, under whose care she had attained that proficiency which afterwards, in the stately prison of Hampton Court, gladdened her father's heart, and which, on the last sad occasion of his life, drew from the gentle girl those "pertinent answers" which moistened her father's eyes with tears of joy and pride. And it was beneath the fostering care of Lady Leicester,—the sister

of Lady Carlisle,—*but* the friend of Melancthon, that the young Duke of Gloucester,—he whose early death, happily, called him from the temptations under which his brothers fell,—became the gifted and pious child whose heroism and understanding imparted such a gleam of pleasure to his father's heart.

Beside Lady Leicester, whose costly dress, and staid, matronly bearing, well became the high office of preceptress,—holding some notes of music in her hand, and waiting to string the lute, when required, stood Blanch,—and the gaze of the dissolute Goring was instantly riveted by the rich and glowing tints of her complexion, the soft expression of her downcast countenance, the drooping but graceful figure, over which, down to her waist, flowed tresses of silken hair, dark and curling, and mingled, as they descended upon her arms and shoulders, with rows of pearls, entwined with seeming carelessness, yet with all the art of the foreign *coëffeur* whom the Queen, greatly to her prejudice in the affections of her subjects, prescribed to her household.

A mantle of point lace hung carelessly over one shoulder, joined with a clasp of

pearls below the sleeve, upon the white arm of the fair Blanch, and no glove, nor mitten, nor ornament concealed nor defaced the rounded wrist, or taper fingers upon which, (had Blanch been a modern belle,) clusters of rings, and a whole harness of bracelets, would have impaired the symmetry of that which no jewelery can improve. A robe of white satin, long and full, gave height and dignity to the still girlish figure of eighteen, — the whole attire was graceful, modest, womanish; not bold and free, but easy, and yet well considered; and Goring, as Blanch raised her head, which was bowed, in an attitude of attention, over the royal children, exclaimed involuntarily,

“A coronet might well become that head!”

“’Tis such a head,” said the King, withdrawing for an instant, and looking at the fine symmetrical features, as he would at a picture, “as poor Anthony Vandycke would have limned with infinite care. He kept a great table when he lived at Eltham, and used to detain his company, that he might study their faces. But time presseth, and I must see Sir Henry Gage, touching this matter of Basing House,” added the King, with a sigh.

He kissed the brow of his young daughter as he spoke, then her cheeks, and lips, looking at her between each fond caress with a father's truest pride. "Bestow that on thy best of friends!" he exclaimed suddenly, detaching from his sleeve a pearl of inestimable value; "give it to my Lady Leicester, who hath taught thee to gain better ornaments than these."

"Keep it for her,—for my sake," added the King with much emotion, looking earnestly at the noble preceptress. He stooped down to raise the infant Duke of Gloucester, who was playing on the floor, to his arms, as he spoke; the King held him for many moments pressed to a throbbing heart, then consigned him to his kind preceptress in silence, and the Countess, wise and discreet, instantly left the room. When the parent and children again met, not even the vestige of royal power, not that shadow of freedom, with which Charles was long tantalized, remained. Basing—the last spot of ground which held out before the victorious Cromwell,—had been sacked and burnt; the King was vainly essaying to escape from Hampton Court, the children were prisoners also; and the very pearl which Charles bade his child bestow as a me-

mento of her gratitude, was taken from the heart-broken Lady Leicester, by order of the Parliament.

"It is well that interview is over," said Charles, starting from a reverie, as the door slowly closed, and the quick, light footsteps of his children, were heard no more over the polished oak floors. "It is well. I have now nought but affairs of state to occupy me," repeated the King, passing his hand across his brow. "Touching Basing House, — Sir Henry Gage shall march thither anon. His so late campaign in Flanders, will have fitted him no less for the office, than his great experience as a soldier. Besides he is a gentleman held in singular esteem by the lords of the Council."

"He can be joined," replied Goring with a semblance of carelessness, "by some of those who could not keep Greenland House any longer — Colonel Hawkins's men, — and there is a young officer with a Volunteer troop of horse, who oweth your majesty some service, and who hath been performing some acts of signal bravery in the relief of Greenland; let *him* face this service of danger; 'tis fitting he prove his loyalty, — I mean Sidney Godolphin."

"True," replied the King, "this can be proposed to the council; and now, my dear Goring, for a game at chess, ere we go to prayers, for nought abstracts the mind so readily as that mimic war."

"The chess, but not the prayers," muttered Goring, as he followed the King into a private apartment, where Lindesay, the Duke of Richmond, and Sir George Wharton composed the chosen and intimate associates of the monarch, whom they daily loved more and more, and daily more and more mistrusted; for they saw that his noble nature was worked upon by designing men.

But Goring, ere the King retired to his closet, attended by those of the Protestant faith to his latest devotions, repaired to the apartments of Lady Carlisle, situated in Merton College. As he approached, the general perceived that the gallery was lighted up, and the sounds of the lute and tabor were heard. The Queen's household were solacing themselves in the dance, and merry groups were footing in a corantoe, even whilst ruin and disaster reigned in all directions over the country.

The general looked on for a moment. The face which he wanted to see was not there; Lady Carlisle was not there;

and he sought her in her apartment, which was tracked by the strong odour of perfumes, as well as discovered by the sound of whispering voices within its walls.

"We have withdrawn, general," said Lady Carlisle, in a tone of great sweetness and sympathy, "to bear our sweet mourner company."

She thus spoke of the lovely Lady Sunderland, who, in widow's weeds, her sunny ringlets all put back, and a grave head-dress of white lawn made with bands around the brow, supplying the place of gay flowers and rich jewels, sat near the countess; "*Is she not disconsolate?* A widow, indeed," continued Lady Carlisle, directing General Goring's eyes to the delicate face of Saccharissa, the hue of which was now of transparent whiteness; "and we are to lose her soon—on Friday, with the King's host. Ah! wherever Saccharissa roameth, she will find friends—I dare not for my life add, lovers."

"No, 'tis early days," resumed the Countess of Carlisle, closing the door abruptly after her niece, who rose in silence and retired to her own apartment. "Never heed that; let no good Christians despond. My Lord Lindesay goeth to protect her. So they will do well,—vastly well."

"Methought," said General Goring, "there had been some antique story of Lindesay and my Lady Sunderland."

"Hush! 'tis a matter of history for the next century, not for this," exclaimed the countess, putting her fair hand before Goring's lips. "I never deal in scandal. My own opinion is that, if the Lady Sunderland's weeds were not so becoming, she would doff them soon. There is no beauty which I know, that will bear looking ill-favoured long worse than Saccharissa's. What think you, Mistress Blanch?"

"I think," said Blanch, "that, were I Lady Sunderland, I would never part from those weeds, as you call them. I would cherish them as the last traces and links which bound me to the memory of a true and brave heart. Had I lost a husband in battle, I should be too proud to let the world forget his honour and my woe."

"Then, Mistress Blanch esteemeth warlike fame," said General Goring, turning his bright and fearful gaze upon the young lady.

"So highly," replied Blanch, her face suffusing with certain emotions as she spoke, "that, were I so happy as to be

united to true greatness, to claim a wife's participation in the glories of a valiant man's career, I could part with him, perchance, without despair, could I be certain that his name should be linked in death with honour, renown. and the memory of after times."

"You are meant to be a soldier's bride, that is certain," said Lady Carlisle, looking shrewdly at Goring. "By the way, who undertakes the action to relieve Basing?—there will be fame enough there, and danger too!"

"'Tis a service of much hazard," answered Goring, "especially for the return. Sir Henry Gage, it is reported, is the chief, and his majesty purposeth to join thereto Master Sidney Godolphin, who hath signalized himself since his renewed allegiance at the defence of Greenland House!"

"Hum!" The countess cast a glance at Blanch; her cheek was now pale, her looks were anxious. "'Tis an easy matter to talk gaily of danger when there is none present. Master Godolphin stands a fair chance of retrieving his discreditable conduct at Wardour."

"It was not discreditable," exclaimed Blanch quickly. "It was humane, honourable—brave!"

"Any man who is a renegado," said General Goring, coarsely, "deserveth shooting, or hanging up. I trust I shall never soil my armour in company with Sidney Godolphin. He hath been bribed by the parliament-men; they did not pay well enough, and *he* grew out of humour with his comrades."

"A peerage in prospect, contented him better," interposed Lady Carlisle. "O, trust me! Men are all alike, they are reasonable creatures — what want they but their price? as my Lord Glamorgan saith. Besides the Parliament's men made no account of Master Godolphin."

"What is a man who can only talk and harangue?" exclaimed Goring: "a mere vapour on a May morning; a meteor looking like a star, yet no star either, but that he resembleth most a falling planet."

"True!" cried Lady Carlisle. "Godolphin had best die; for he never can retrieve his honour otherwise."

"'Tis untrue—it is unjust!" exclaimed Blanch indignantly. "Master Godolphin hath changed upon conviction; he will confer honour on any party with whom he conjoins,—distinction on himself!"

She arose to leave the room; but Lady Carlisle held her arm, and Blanch was,

despite her will, constrained to stay—to be conciliated by caresses and compliments from Lady Carlisle ; and to receive, in blushing, and perhaps angry, silence, the gallantry of General Goring, who, from henceforwards, became her proclaimed devotee. She was obliged to remain until nearly midnight to listen, with little satisfaction, to the degrading discourse of two evil-minded persons, ycleped worldly-wise—that is, endowed with the faculty of lowering the moral standard ; *debasing* all men, and women, too, in good opinion ; perfect at discovering the inmost motives of men to be all sinister and selfish ; and consistent in denying to any a single generous resolve or pure design ;—sceptical on all points save on the universal depravity, although they did not term it by that name, of all civilised society.

A series of entertainments preceded the departure of the King and Queen from Oxford ; and kept up the spirits of the military who thronged into the town, which presented a constant succession of fresh faces. For the nobility, who found their services ineffectual elsewhere, brought their retainers to Oxford, whence these noble volunteer corps, mostly horse, might issue at the disposal of the council of war.

And it was known to be highly acceptable to the King, who was soon to leave in Oxford his children, that as many regiments as possible should be quartered in that city.

Blanch was returning one afternoon from mass; the streets of Oxford were in confusion; Sir Arthur Aston, who is said "to have been very much esteemed where he was not known, and very much disliked where he was," was now the governor; for the Queen, who never thought herself safe except when she was in the care of a Roman Catholic, had persuaded the King to confer that trust on him. The change had produced some rioting—much discontent; and besides, whilst the cavalry had such a commander as General Goring, who made it a rule to restrain no excesses of the soldiery, innocence and youth ran, indeed, severe risks when exposed to the unruly multitude. Moreover, all now was in a peculiarly unsettled state; affairs had reached a crisis. The King was to take the command of his army on the ensuing day: Henrietta was also to depart from Oxford for the south, and Charles purposed conducting his broken-spirited queen to Marlborough. Goring was to be left in the chief command of the garrison, for

a season. He was the only individual who, in the absence of Prince Rupert, had that influence over the troops which could induce them to brave any dangers at his fiat. At the same time, they were aware that their general would overlook almost any disorders in the time of peace.

The High-street, into which Blanch at length made her way, presented such a scene as it had never before nor since afforded. Amid the throng of military, here and there appeared a young gownsman or a grave divine wending his way through defiles of spurs and hedge-rows of swords, for some of the Oxford Volunteers were drawn out for afternoon parade. These were a young, fresh body of recruits, with strength as yet unbroken, faces unscarred by wounds, and legs rebelliously indisposed to that discipline which was imperatively required. Anon came a bevy of fair ladies, escorted across the streets to their lodgings by gallant cavaliers, whose long locks were blown about by the spring gales; but whose tarnished suits and soiled plumes betrayed the approach of that general poverty which the higher classes must necessarily feel so bitterly; but which they have, as in the instances of the great Rebellion and the French

Revolution, sustained with so remarkable a patience and heroism.

A party of horsemen were coming in from the outworks near Abingdon, as Blanch stood under a projecting porch whilst they passed. They looked dispirited and fatigued,—all, save their robust commander, General Goring, who rode gaily along, bending to the many salutations and compliments of the ladies who chanced to see him, when, on a sudden, his eye glanced on Blanch. He alighted; and, giving his horse to a servant, hastened to offer his escort to the young damsel.

She would far more gladly have been alone, for there was something that abashed and overpowered her in the addresses which Goring had begun openly to proffer to her; but his manner was so commanding, and there was such a strong determination manifested in this famous (or infamous) general, that she felt it vain to resist—and therefore permitted him to attend her to Merton.

Few of those old and overtopping houses, built with watling work, now remain in our provincial towns, almost closing out the light of the sun from their narrow causeways beneath. In those days, to walk along the streets which lead from

the main thoroughfares to the recesses of the colleges, was a service of much difficulty and some danger, when troops were in the town ; and Blanch, after some moments of confusion, found the support of General Goring's arm by no means unwelcome.

She passed a house which had been temporarily fitted up for the reception of the wounded. Some men were carrying, on a board, a poor wretch who had been brought from the ramparts ; the blood streamed from the hard couch on which the wounded soldier was conveyed ; and Wardour, and all its concomitant scenes of horror, came to the recollection of Blanch. She shuddered, and her limbs trembled,—her agitation was perceived by Goring.

“What mean those churls,” he exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, “by bearing yon trooper so slowly along to scare the gentles ! Begone ! toss him into the first hole ! Don't ye see that ye affright the lady ?”

“O hurt him not !” exclaimed Blanch, rushing forward to arrest the cruel speed of the bearers. “He groans ! Do not hurry him along for me ! There, poor wretch ! take money to procure thee com-

forts," added the kind-hearted girl, placing some pieces of gold on the board as those who carried the man stood still. "I shall sink—I am sick and frightened," she added, a few moments afterwards, to Goring. "He is a kinsman. Nigel! Nigel!"

At the sound of her voice, a wan face, half covered with grizzly hair, intended to be love-locks, but which had fallen about the cheeks of the young man, was slightly raised; and eyes, which pain had caused nearly to start from their sockets, were turned for an instant on Blanch.

"Who would have thought," cried the girl passionately, "that thou hadst been here? that thou hadst fought among the King's troops? O General Goring! Go to—see him well cared for! He has a father—mother!—see him cared for!"

"That he is thy kinsman sufficeth," answered Goring, with a courtesy strongly contrasted with his recent fierceness. "Hold, brutes! Hurry him not thither! Take him to the general's—to my lodgings! and let the best surgeons be summoned. What! and is he thy kinsman? Stay! send for a litter; let there be more bearers! and hasten," he added, turning to one of his lacqueys, "on that horse, to provide the best bed, with clean furniture;

and—in what degree is he related unto thee, lady?”

“Oh, Nigel!” exclaimed Blanch, scarcely heeding Goring; “hast thou much pain?—is any limb broken? Thinkest thou a mortal wound is given?” she cried, weeping, and addressing one of the supporters, for the aspect of a kinsman had an unwonted interest to her, so far away from all relations.

“I hope so, by my troth!” thought Goring.

“Do not, I pray ye,” said a gruff voice issuing from the board, “stand parleying and pitying me! I had rather have some lint and plaster than—oh!” His voice was stifled in groans; and ere his distressed kinswoman could reply, he was removed to a litter, and carried away by an officious crew of attendants.

“He dwelleth at Troy,” was Blanch’s reply to the numerous questions, which General Goring impetuously uttered—“and his father, Sir Thomas Somerset, is cousin in the second degree to mine uncle of Worcester. O! the chance of war! which can level both the strong and the weak!”

“Under which do you rank your cousin?” inquired Goring, his dark eyes glaring upon the pale but beautiful face, which

was ever and anon turned back to look at the receding litter.

"He is not wise, but hath an honest, resolved heart! And I have known, and—shame be on me!—tormented him from our infancy."

Goring was silent for some moments. He and Blanch were now drawing near to the garden of Merton; the general was a man wholly devoid of delicacy of feeling; but he knew the force which a seeming burst of passion has over feminine hearts; he felt that that was an occasion, such as might not in the hurry of war again occur, of breaking silence upon the subject of, what he called, his honourable intentions.

"Forgive me!" he cried, grasping the hand which he had held: "pardon my rashness. Is this the cousin of whom report speaketh, as one once betrothed, and still thy suitor? If so, condemn me not, fair Mistress Blanch, if I hinder him not from dying; for I love thee as I live! As I exist, I love no other woman like unto thee! I worship thy very footsteps. I affect thy beauty more than that of all the ladies of the court." He was interrupted by an exclamation of anger and disgust.

"This from you, General Goring?—you?" exclaimed Blanch, looking at him with an astonishment so unfeigned as even to abash the great master of dissimulation—"from the husband of Lady Lettice? from a man bound by every tie to love and honour another? How dare you, sir," added the girl, in all the dignity of a just resentment, "insult a gentlewoman, and a Somerset by your addresses?" She spoke with a spirit and a decision that awed, without disgusting; for the gentleness and refinement of her sex were not laid aside—(they need never be so)—even in the fervour of an aroused indignation.

"And who, madam," replied General Goring, and he followed the rapid steps of the offended Blanch as she passed underneath the gate of Merton, then decorated with the sculptured history of John the Baptist; and pursued her even to the Garden court, whose solemn scenery, well adapted to the academic character of that small but well-disposed enclosure, looked sombrous in the decline of day, "—and who, madam," he replied, "gave so unfair, so garbled a history of my unhappy condition? Pause, fair Mistress Blanch, ere you indulge such contumely, and commit an act of injustice upon the

most unfortunate of men. It is not for me," added General Goring, in a low voice, "to cast an odium upon her, who for a few days more—but only a few—must continue to bear my name. She is an abandoned, a worthless—" he broke out in an excited tone, but finished softly; "yet let me not lift the veil from the hideous aspect of her crimes. They have wronged this heart! Madam! Farewell!"

Blanch was continuing her way into the second court of Old Merton, whilst Goring, walking by her side, thus spoke. She stopped, for the recollection of those early and inauspicious contracts by which the higher classes were enchained to each other, occurred to her mind—and she felt that her taunts might have been ungenerous.

"Was it an early, an enforced wedding? were you bound to your wife ere you could think, feel, reason?" she said, very hurriedly. "If so, accept my good wishes, pardon my discourtesy."

"O! madam! you have not been the first to revive regrets, hitherto vain—to add to the sting of dishonour and domestic misery. The time may come, when you will judge me more leniently," answered

Goring, sighing, and looking on his plumed cap, which he held in his hand as meekly, and with an air of as much submission, as if he had *never* irritated the jealous frenzy of an injured wife, by outrages on decency; or as if—and perhaps he thought so—*he* were the martyr to infidelity, and not the insulted, the repudiated Lady Lettice, whose law-suits with her husband, on the point of being adjusted, had occupied for some years past the public attention, and whose wrongs—proclaimed by a fierce and vindictive spirit—cast a stigma on the party that could place the dissolute Goring at the head of military affairs.

Blanch stopped as they entered the third court of Merton, which is bounded by the chapel on the north side.

“Perchance, thou hast been wronged by vulgar fame,” she said, shrinking as she spoke, from the tall figure of Goring, with a fear that she could not account for; “if so, how do I pity thee! Yet, be consoled, for such mishap befalls the highest, and the noblest. Farewell. I pardon thy boldness—but proffer not the love of one whose honour is bound to another, to her who deserves to be called gentle.”

She stood for a moment, and receiving

no reply from the apparently subdued Goring, who bent his head reverently as she passed him, made her way back into the warden's lodgings, where lay her appointed chambers.

A small room received her, panting, within its quiet precincts. And there had Blanch leisure to review the events of the day; to recall the intimidation of Panzani, the bold declarations of Goring; and there a full sense of the perils and difficulties of her situation flashed, for the first time, upon her mind.

She had been disarmed for an instant by the meek and melancholy tone of the dissembler, but, upon reflection, distrust succeeded to pity. He was a man of the strongest passion, of a determined will—of the most unflinching perseverance in all his designs, whether of love, or of war; of the greatest ability in contriving, remorseless in executing his projects. He would stop at no artifice to attain his will. Affrighted beyond measure, Blanch already felt herself within his power—and yet she pitied him. His proffered love was hateful to her, and yet it disarmed her just resentment. Such is woman! And when we talk of the duplicity, the dark schemes of man, in his libertine designs upon her

happiness, we may feel assured that it is the weakness, and inconsistencies of woman's heart that bids them prosper.

There are few from whom, under such circumstances, a young and beautiful woman can seek counsel. Her own sex are prone to envy—what is perhaps worse, they have seldom a truly nice sense of honour in keeping a secret. In such respect how far do men excel them! In the other sex, who, undoubtedly, on points which require knowledge of each other, and of the world, to determine a right course, are valuable in counsel, how seldom can the young and lovely, save from her father, husband, brother, look for a disinterested adviser! How rarely is that which professes to be friendship entirely free from some dearer sentiment, which shackles the course of true counsels, and causes them to spring from some reference to self!

There are some persons—and in the journey of life a few, a very few such are presented to the harassed traveller on its busy highways—on whose sincerity, honour, and good judgment, an intuitive dependence, unaided even by experience, is justly felt. There are some, chiefly among the stronger sex, who have the

delicacy and tenderness of woman, with the stern integrity, the consequent plain-speaking, the solid discretion of man. To such invaluable advisers, even in the nicest points of difficulty, may woman with safety unfold herself, rather than to the imaginative, and to the inexperienced of her own sex. And such a man was Lord Lindsey.

Blanch resolved, difficult as the resolution might be to execute, to consult one who, as she remembered with a sense of delight, had never, by word or look, addressed to her the language of love. She believed that his professions of goodwill had not at their root what she now regarded as the corrupted leaven of love; and she resolved to seek an interview. All things were in confusion that night. Early on the morrow the King and Queen were to set forth on their journey, the last that they ever performed together. The young Prince, the Duke of Gloucester, and the Princess Elizabeth, whom the King left, as his dearest pledges, to the care and fidelity of the citizens of Oxford, were, at a late hour, to be brought from their nursery, to take leave of a mother, who would gladly have parted from them for ever, rather than that one hair of the head of her precious son

Charles—her hope and glory, should have been injured. The court was thus to be broken up; and its remnants, as far as the attendants of Henrietta Maria were concerned, were to be left to repair to their several homes as they might, or to abide in the now hungry, and soon to be famishing, town of Oxford; the supplies to which were daily diminishing, from the marches gained upon the adjacent counties by Cromwell and Fairfax.

The gallery of Merton, daily, on ordinary occasions, the resort and promenade of the ladies of the household, was deserted, and nearly dark, when Blanch entered it, hoping, by a persevering attendance there, to catch Lord Lindesay as he went, after even-song, into the Queen's privy chamber, to deliver, as he possibly might, some message from the King; for Lindesay, and Blanch remembered it with a feeling of desolation, was to accompany Charles, whom he never left whilst the monarch was free to choose his attendants, with the body guards whom Lindesay commanded, to Abingdon on the morrow.

Blanch waited long; at last, when the shades of night had wholly obscured the gallery, till the moon arising, cast her

consoling beams, "friend of the friendless," upon the anxious Blanch, a calm and steady footstep was heard. Lord Lindesay, wrapped in his riding-coat, for the guards were to be under arms that night, and he was prepared for the damps of the evening, slowly walked along the gallery.

Blanch caught his arm as he passed. Lord Lindesay turned to speak to her kindly; the grave, but benevolent look, the gentle voice, unnerved one who had, in the bitterness of that last hour of lonely musing, felt herself indeed alone amid a herd of heartless, and, perchance, designing strangers. She burst into tears.

Lord Lindesay, with the surprised manner of one who is suddenly diverted from some grave, yet dry office, into the gentler channels of private feeling, looked earnestly into Blanch's face, and, after a few moments' pause, conducted her into a small room, which happened to be vacant, leading out of the gallery; and with the deepest respect, yet in the accents of the tenderest sympathy, he begged her to unfold to him the cause of her distress.

The manner of Lord Lindesay towards Blanch presented a strong contrast to that of Goring, for there is all that can raise

a woman in her own estimation, in the respectful admiration of a man of honour ; all that can degrade her, if she be not already degraded, in her secret opinion, in the coarse homage of the profligate. And Blanch felt quickly consoled and reassured when she looked at the kindly but open aspect of Lord Lindesay. By degrees she found courage to tell her tale ; it was imparted at first with much hesitation, but the necessities of her case, and a full confidence in the sincerity and friendship of him to whom she told it, gave her courage. Yes ! though the ladies of the Court had jeered at the Platonic character of Lord Lindesay's avowed interest in her welfare ; though they had hinted, and perhaps believed, that mere friendship could not have displayed the enthusiasm, without the passion of love ; Blanch, in her inexperience, was wiser than they were. *She* saw no sinister nor covert meaning in the avowed friendship of the noble Lindesay, but trusted, all guileless as she was, that it was in the power of woman to inspire the highest sentiments of admiration and esteem, and yet that those sentiments should be wholly independent of the earthly alloy of human passion.

Lord Lindesay listened with the deepest attention. As Blanch went on, as she revealed the particulars of the interview between her and Goring, his countenance flushed, and he arose precipitately from his seat and walked to and fro in much agitation. Then he stopped short—his face became pale and serious—he bent his mournful gaze upon Blanch, and continued it long without speaking. Some recollections overpowered one who was known to have braved life's direst woes without weakness—he bowed his head upon the chair whereon he was kneeling, and many moments elapsed before he raised it from that attitude.

"What means this, my lord?" cried the agitated Blanch. "Have I said, have I done aught amiss? Oh, pardon one who has no friend but thee!"

Lord Lindesay sat down beside her—he could not, as it seemed, withdraw his eyes from that fair young face, so innocently turned to his. Perhaps—for none know the human heart—there might be in the breast of Lindesay at that instant some fonder wish, some keener interest, than was ever avowed or indulged—the worldly would have judged it so.

"It was the mere recollection," he re-

plied, trying to smile, "of some former incidents in which Lady Carlisle acted no worthy part.—Let them be forgotten. It is for those *here*," he added, in a half whisper, "that we must struggle—alas!"

"And wherefore alas?" asked Blanch, timorously. "I have friends—I am free to go hence—teach me but the way."

"O fly, if you will be safe—innocent, uncontaminated!" exclaimed Lord Lindsay, rising and stamping his foot with rage. "Yet how? how?" he added, with an air of despair, clasping his hands together. "Of all men breathing," he resumed, after a moment's pause, "shun and dread Goring—of all women, Lucy of Carlisle!"

"There is no need to teach me that lesson. Oh, Lord Lindesay, support and soothe me!—do not add to my terrors!"

"—And I will," replied Lindesay, grasping, and holding for an instant to his heart, the cold and trembling hand, which in the paroxysm of fear was extended to his. — "Lose no time,—obtain an interview with the Queen—throw thyself at her majesty's feet, and entreat that thou mayest go hence to-morrow with their majesties; and I will second thy petition with the King. If they refuse, hast thou

not a certain plea against the snares of Lady Carlisle, an obstacle to the ambition of Glamorgan, whom I detect to be at the basis of all this?—Fly to the protection of thy affianced husband—produce thy contract with Sir Edward Herbert—” He paused, for Blanch had sunk down in despair, and covered her face with her hands.

“All that is at an end,” she said, in a low tone—“I have no such protection—the contract exists not.”

“Was it *thy* doing?” asked Lord Lindsay, gently; and for a moment, as Blanch looked up, an expression of the deepest respect, yet not unmingled with a shade of tenderness, glistened in the eyes of the nobleman.

“It was! Oh, my lord, if I am indiscreet, if I lack the modesty of woman in confiding to you, judge me not harshly—counsel me as your sister. Sir Edward Herbert and I were affianced, being but children—when years had revolved, the companion of my childhood had become distasteful to me—I frankly confessed it.”

“And was it,” asked Lord Lindsay, with so slight a tremor of his voice that Blanch could scarcely perceive it, “was

it alone distaste? Cannot the broken vow be now renewed, in this peril, to succour and protect thee? — I have asked a hasty, an unkind question," he added, quickly, after a silence of some duration, seeing that the tears of Blanch were her only answer.

He arose and walked away. It was in a calm tone that Lindesay resumed the subject of discourse. His advice to Blanch was that of a gentleman and a friend; his manner, that of a brother; but his counsels were not untinged by the forethought and prudence of a man of the world. He again urged her to try the appeal to the Queen, yet warned Blanch against unfolding her fears of Goring, who was high in favour with Henrietta. He besought her to avoid, rather than to repel, the vindictive, powerful, and remorseless Goring, who was never known to spare man in his anger, nor woman in the impulse of a guilty passion.

CHAPTER VIII.

Let fooles great Cupid's yooke disdaine,
Loving their own wild freedom better :
Whilst, proud of my triumphant chaine,
I sit and court my beauteous fetter. CAREW.

So! thou hast been rejected! Alas! poor Goring! Well, be it so. Ye lords of the earth must needs be humbled; 'tis as good for you as the treading on this bed of herbs is for the unsavoury plant, that groweth but the better for it," said Lady Carlisle, stamping her small foot upon a patch of green in the garden of Merton, as she spoke. "What's to be done? Panzani must threaten the contumacious fair one with excommunication."

"Rejected, and with scorn," replied Goring, disconsolately. "Is it for this return that I have been harbouring in my lodging an idiot! that clodhopper cousin, fitter to follow a team of oxen than to mount a rampart; an animal so infernally ugly, so disgustingly stupid, that, to be courteous to him, I am obliged to swear

an extra half-hour every day to vent the peccant humours?—that —”

“And cannot he be turned to any purpose?” asked Lady Carlisle, thoughtfully; “Canst thou not entice him into thy interests?”

“To mar the best-concerted plot that might ever issue even from your ladyship’s brain,” answered Goring, “for he is a fool. Here is my bill of divorce. I am free;” and Goring laid his hands on a paper as he spoke. “Thanks to the Fates, Lady Lettice tormenteth me no more—yet, to what avail?”

“Well, if looking well will not win her heart, being downcast and disordered cannot prevail,” observed Lady Carlisle, casting a glance at General Goring’s disheveled attire, the result of a night of debauchery; “so, fare thee well!” She tripped into the warden’s lodgings as she spoke.

“Fare thee well, my lady!” repeated Goring, standing for a few moments in silence, and looking after her. “Fare thee well! Cozened for once! Thou—thou,” he exclaimed, an expression of contempt curling his lips as he muttered to himself, “thou art an arch dissembler! No, my sweet countess, all this seeming

care for me hath a deeper source: thy own charms are mightily well displayed to the disconsolate and discomfited Goring. But lo—here again! Kind lady, fair countess, charming friend!” cried Goring, kneeling and kissing the white hand which was held out playfully; “I am not all wretched, when thou comest to bless me. Ah, Lucy! (forgive that word for old remembrance sake;) hadst thou been kind, and had my Lord Carlisle earlier laid his head low —”

“Foolery,” exclaimed Lady Carlisle, colouring through a coat of paint; “thou wast never serious in thy suit.”

“I was! by all the angels! and would be so still, did scorn and coldness look less frigidly from that fair face. Thinkest thou that the childish beauties of the girl thou hast assigned to me can compete with those more ripened charms of thine, fairest of fair royalists?”

“I came but to bid thee not to fail at the masque to-night;—and thou must needs detain me with thy absurdities,” answered the countess, coquettishly drawing her muffler around her face. “Dolorous indeed will our dancers be—the princess is sick with grief at the departure of her *fond* mother,” added the

countess, with an emphasis upon the word. "I could have laughed to see the Queen's haste, and how her majesty shook her children from her, whilst Jermyn stood by. Troth, there is no surer sign that a woman's heart is given away where it should not be bestowed, than her caring not for her offspring."

"Henrietta will never cross the seas again when once her foot toucheth France," said Goring. "Regarding the revels, I shall be content if one fair face is there: but I may be on duty to-night."

"It will be marvelously dull; and save that my Lord Lindesay's departure takes away one shadow from our joys, 'twill be unsufferable. However, I shall not abide it long. I go hence o' Sunday."

"Lord Lindesay!" repeated General Goring. "By the way, hath he been mine enemy, think you? Is he enamoured of the fair girl himself? Why weareth he still that love-knot on the hilt of his sword? Have you been tampering with me, madam, and favouring his suit with Mistress Blanch the while?"

Lady Carlisle laughed loud. "Lord Lindesay! Why, Goring, know you not his history? Lindesay hath never forgiven me that passage of his early life.

I will tell it to thee, if thou wilt not proclaim it on the house-top, and prove to thee that Lindesay wears not the love-knot for Mistress Blanch's fair sake."

"Well?"

"It is an old story," said Lady Carlisle, slightly embarrassed. "My Lady Sunderland had a sister—a pale, languishing beauty, with that one singular inconvenience, a heart, which she bestowed on Lindesay—and they were betrothed—and friends were willing—and the nuptial-feast was, if I mistake not, bespoken. She was my niece, though in years not far inferior."

"Of course," replied Goring, "inferior in aught else, I will swear."

"Stop! It was not *my* doing, General Goring, that the girl, divinely handsome as she was, chose to wed, at the eleventh hour, or to say that she would wed a richer suitor. 'Twas not my fault she *did* it. I had no hand in that matter, although my Lord Lindesay said so, and a wicked world chose to slander me."

"Shameful!" exclaimed Goring, who perfectly knew the whole story, and was aware how worldly a part Lady Carlisle had acted in the melancholy business, but wished to hear the version which

she gave of the affair. "Well, what more?"

"Isabel had a richer suitor; and it was natural, supposing I *had* any share in it, that I should counsel the child, scarce seventeen, for her good, and seek to provide for Dorothea, Saccharissa, or whatever the world may choose to call her."

"Reasonable enough."

"Strange to say, Isabel grew jealous of Lindesay's affections, jealous of her sister. *I* never infused that into her mind. But the girl was desperate—the match was hurriedly broken off, and Lindesay hath hated me since."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, indeed. When the knot was tied they came to an understanding, it seems, and Isabel chose to die—of grief, Lindesay swears. I say, it was an ague, brought on by her stupid, odious, rich, old tyrant of a husband, who took her to the fens of Lincolnshire."

"And Sacharissa?"

"O," said Lady Carlisle, "she too chose to take her own way. Lindesay would have been the better match; but he! he was in a flame and blaze enough to set fire to Magdalen Tower; and, far from Isabel's jealousy being well-founded,

hath never seen my niece Sunderland since, until now."

"By my troth he hath not. But 'tis a hard case upon thee, my Lady Carlisle, who neither meddled nor made, but had only the good of thy gentle niece, and the honour of thy family, at heart, to be thus traduced.—A designing, artful, heartless woman," said Goring to himself, "who schemed without mercy,—what is far worse, without success!"

"And this is why Lindesay hath ever spited me; and why he will injure thy cause, because promoted by me," said Lady Carlisle.

Weak is that man or woman that seeks to justify a bad cause. "I never knew so much before!" thought Goring, as, after some further parleying, he turned from Lady Carlisle, and proceeded homewards through Merton-lane.

Popular among the lowest classes, detested by all who knew the secrets of his heart, Goring passed haughtily—for his temper was intractable on certain occasions—towards the corn-market, now a fiction; for the supplies which could be reaped from the country around were mostly carried into the storehouse of the garrison, before the half-starving popula-

tion of Oxford could purchase, at any price, the food of life. A creeping, shivering, penury-stricken air, had already begun to pervade the old denizens of this once proud city. Men looked depressed, and suspicious; women bold, hardened, and flaunty, or, like scared birds who fled from the fowler—for the general demoralization which civil war brings in its train had progressed fearfully since Goring took the chief command. It was not, as yet, that the awful word famine might be applied to this—the last stay of Charles's power—but haggard faces, tottering footsteps amongst the old—amongst the young—oh! awful and unnatural sign of fearful times! hollow cheeks, and pallid hues; the bounding step of youthful joy changed into a sad and halting pace, the roundness of childhood gone—proclaimed that want, fear, vice, had done, in fact, their work; and prepared the breaking spirits and failing strength of the inhabitants of Oxford for the conquering arms of Fairfax.

General Goring stopped at the portal of an ancient house in Saint Giles's street, wherein for a week, tended with ostentatious care, Master Nigel Somerset had lain in an upper story. His wound was not

dangerous; and, with such good attendance Nigel had soon recovered, and would have been able enough to have resumed his post at the fortifications, but that the general, for his own purposes, detained the cousin of Blanch for a day or two more—an act of plausible humanity, for which Goring was well furnished; and, for once, the great dissembler was overreached—by a simpleton.

A tap at the door with the hilt of the general's sword brought a young female to open it, and a face looked forth from the low and antique passage beyond, such as angels might have wept to view.

It was that of a young person about two or three and twenty, and in the delicacy of its small features, and clear pale tint of a fair complexion, the history might be told how it came there: for nothing old, nor ordinary, nor repulsive would, believe it, have found a resting-place under Goring's roof.

The character of the individual to whom that meek countenance, those dove-like appealing eyes belonged, seemed to be that between a gentlewoman and a servant—the least felicitous of all conditions; for the doomed one has, in such a sphere, to encounter two mighty domestic evils,

or rather a hydra of home-bred woes, the insolence of the low, and the tyranny of the high. And it was impossible to gaze upon the gentle creature, who stood with a bunch of huge keys suspended from her girdle, and a bodkin and scissors hanging from the pocket of her bodice, denoting her vocation of sempstress and house-keeper;—and, on the other hand, to look at her smooth and shining ringlets, and tasty head-dress, and to contemplate her slight figure, clad in a sober-coloured garment, yet that dress framed after the fashion of gentleness,—it was impossible to view her in her double capacity, so useful, yet so humble, as she seemed, imploring and anxious as she looked, when she gazed timidly upon Goring, without a certain unseasonable compassion, if it may be so called—for it was that intuitive sentiment of pity which we feel for the oppressed portion of the creation.

“Go within, Mabel,” said the General, harshly, and pushing her back from the porch into which she had stepped; “go within—and mind thou let not the sentinels observe thee—we must have no scandal here.”

“Scandal!” muttered Mabel to herself, her eyes upraised for an instant, as

she followed General Goring—and she was wont to follow—into a room where a table, covered with letters, showed the busy life of the great commander, when he was not engaged in the field.

“Bring me wine, and begone; nay, come back—here, unloose this breast-plate;—not so clumsily, girl, hang the cloak up—I shall not go abroad till night—there is an aglet off my doublet—hast thou thy needles by thee?—Well—anon! Do not pursue me with thy officious help just now. Now, some wine, Mabel, and then trouble me not, till—”

General Goring began writing ere yet the breast-plate was fairly unloosed by the practised hands of Mabel.

“How long am I to wait ere I get the wine?” he exclaimed a moment afterwards, stamping his foot, and pushing her from him.

The violence was customary, and it offended not—the meek victim withdrew, but as she returned quickly, very quickly—those soft dove-like eyes, whose sweet glances might have gladdened the loving heart of an honest man, were dimmed by tears.

General Goring drank deeply from the beaker; the draught seemed to restore

his good-humour, for he looked up at Mabel and, for an instant, he seemed surprised at the now fast falling tears, greatly surprised—for what right had *she*, the slave of his caprices, his humble, useful, clinging kinswoman, to entertain for an instant the feelings which belong to the rich and happy,—jealousy—resentment?”

For Mabel was a distant, poor relative of the now divorced wife of Goring, the Lady Lettice, who had taken the orphan girl under her charge. It had been the lot of Mabel to live, from the period of girlhood to womanhood in that hot-bed of the worst of passions, a divided household; it had been her office to share the confidence, and to bear the humours of those who poured upon her all the virulence of their angry turmoils. She had suffered from the jealous fury of the often injured wife; her heart went with the cause of the husband—and he had repaid her sympathy, her confidence—by her ruin.

General Goring might then well wonder why the tears of Mabel fell, for he knew no right that the poor degraded being had to feel; he had long treated her like the senseless lap-dog, which he spurned

from him, or caressed with fondness, just as the fancy seized him. He had so long trampled on her every feeling, that he almost forgot that Mabel was not framed of wood or stone.

"Then," he said, after a moment's contemplation of her downcast head, "see thee that my suit of cinnamon velvet be *point de vice* to-night, and mind thou fashion up those collars of Vandycke lace in time to—in time to—," he began to write again as he spoke—"to wear at the revels to-night. By the way, how fares the knight of the limping leg? Hath he eaten as voraciously as ever to-day? Doth it please him to take that black patch from his eye, or to own himself well enough to wear a doublet, and carry a pike? go to —— tell him to come hither, anon."

Mabel silently obeyed. It was some-time ere she returned; when she did so, General Goring was busied in the perusal of a billet which he had just received. It was in the handwriting of Lady Carlisle.

"Such news! such scandal!" Thus ran the despatch. "She whom thou lovest was seen creeping along by the South Sally port at day-break, dressed as a serving-maid: whilst beside her—for the messenger who

brought me tidings went to the bridge with them,—limped a boy, all bepatched and bandaged. They mingled with the suttlers and camp-followers, and followed the army towards Abingdon. So she hath escaped. Shall I send thee a morsel of willow from the court below?

“Thine,

“LUCY.”

General Goring raised his eyes at the approach of Mabel. Her hands clasped together, her supplicating, deprecating look furnished explanation. The apartment of Nigel was empty. He had not been seen that day—no one, in the confusion of the army's movements, had noted his absence. Goring—he who passed “pleasantly,” as it was said, through “any foul or gross act of wickedness,” was baffled by a girl, and by a country youth. What his designs were with respect to Blanch must remain in the oblivion to which Time has committed the details of those outrages to good faith and to virtue with which his memory stands charged. There was no check to his passions, no restraint to his will—save necessity; all moral control was at an end.

He was rising, with a stern mastery

over the violence of his wrath, to look for his cloak, and sword, and to call his attendants to horse, when an exclamation bursting from the lips of Mabel caught his attention. It seemed to Goring to consist of these few words—"I am glad!" He turned a look of fury upon the helpless speaker. Those who had seen the courtly Goring gay and gracious in the dance would little have pictured to themselves the brutal countenance;—they could not have accredited the coarse and cruel, almost infernal, words, which that mouth, so famed for its smile, so charming in its utterance to the ladies of the Court, then cast, in ungoverned fury, at the hapless Mabel. She bent her head and raised her hands to screen it from — what she, perchance, expected, and experience had begotten fear—blows! But she escaped—words were sufficient, and words which wrung her heart, till its passionate throbings caused it seemingly almost to burst, echoed through the apartment. And Goring, having sated his fury, rushed from her, unmoved by her passionate sobs, by her entreaties to be heard, forgiven, restored!—alas, poor slave!—He went forth to summon a troop to pursue the fugitives, or, at all events, to search out their destination.

King Charles, meanwhile, traversing the celebrated causeway which extends two miles from Friar Bacon's study towards Abingdon, journeyed to that ancient and important town. Here most of his foot regiments were quartered ; and here Prince Rupert, diverging from his course to Bristol, had appointed an interview with his royal uncle.

Abingdon, the stronghold of the Royalists, had already suffered from the ravages of the parliamentary forces. Marks of bullet-shots seared the walls of the houses ; the ramparts had been recently repaired, after the encroachments of General Waller's troops : the celebrated Cross, built by the Fraternity of the Holy Cross, had also encountered the destructive force of the Puritan host. Once it rose in the centre of the town an exquisite fabric, of an octangular shape, adorned with three tiers of statues, and surmounted by a figure of the Virgin Mary : whilst, below, there was a row of mitred prelates, who, in their turn, were succeeded by a row of saints. The statues of six British kings, finely carved, formed the basis of the structure—earthly greatness coming the last. But now all was a mass of ruins ; and the antiquary

and the devotee might alike mourn in vain. These monuments of faith, to be respected as such, to be admired as works of art, were fast disappearing during the hurricane of tempestuous passions.

Blanch, in a plain riding-suit, made of the coarsest stuff, descended from her horse, almost the last amid a retinue of servants; and, ere she sought Lord Lindesay, to whom the secret of her disguise was known, deemed it her solemn duty to bend her knee before that ancient shrine, still hallowed, as she considered, by the Holy Mother's presiding spirit: and even Nigel, ere he went with his horses to the hostel, doffed his cap, and, thoughtful for an instant, crossed himself with his head bowed down.

"And when, and where," said Blanch, rising from her devotions, "shall I meet thee again?" She looked round as she spoke, confused and timid, for the market-place was crowded with the rude soldiery, and Blanch felt that her disguise rather increased than diminished the awkwardness of her situation, as far as the lower class (who seldom insult a gentlewoman with their admiration) was concerned.

Ere Nigel could reply, he was driven

back by one of the horse-guards, who was clearing the market-place: "Stand back, there!" said the trooper; "there are horse coming in, under his Highness the Prince; there must be room—make way for his Highness!"

"And," said another person, looking towards one corner of the square, "part of Colonel Hawkins' regiment, from Greenland House, are coming in from *that* quarter. They will be here anon."

"Know you, friend," asked Blanch blushing as the question was proffered, "whether there is one Master Sidney Godolphin amid Colonel Hawkins' men? *He* hath been at Greenland House."

She trembled as she spoke: it seemed to her—it seems so to all the conscious under such circumstances—that the man whom she addressed, the people round about, the whole market-place, knew of her attachment to Godolphin. She even fancied there was something suspicious and strange in the look of the man as he answered—

"No, I know not whither he is bestowed; most likely he will come with the Colonel. Thou meanest, young woman, him who hath just changed his

party, and come over to the King's side? Ah! *he* will do us no good. It little matters where he is."

A pang flushed the face of the young creature, whom the good man, a burgess of the town, unconsciously distressed; the publicity, the popularity, if we may so term it, of a report among the vulgar, pains, sometimes, more than the discriminating and, therefore, qualified disapprobation of an educated person. It is of no use to seem to despise vulgar opinion; Nature has planted that within our breasts which says, "Thou canst not."

Blanch asked no more questions; there had been a temporary palisade laced round the ruined Cross of Abingdon, and within that she stood, clinging to the broken figure of a decapitated monarch, with her head turned and her eyes strained in one direction. The bustle, the turmoil of the market-place, were unperceived by one whose heart was pre-occupied; and the strangeness, and impropriety of her situation alone, for Nigel had not returned to her, were for once disregarded by the modest and delicately-nurtured girl.

For, if she could but see him once more, if she could but catch one glance, hear one word, exchange a kind fare-

well—it was all she had to wish. All! what a volume of after-thought, what an age of happiness would be presented to the memory by that one glimpse—those few longed-for words!

Blanch was standing, unwearied, and deriving a certain sense of protection from the hallowed, shattered remains of Abingdon Cross, when cheers and martial music drew her attention to the opposite side of the market-place.

An armed force was entering the town; and that proud regiment, Prince Rupert's dragoons, headed by the Prince, and now on their way to the siege of Bristol, appeared in view—their general in the van. And, for a time, even Blanch—even the disguised and expectant Blanch could not resist the general enthusiasm with which the hero was received, nor forbear from adding her faint acclamations to the one universal cheer.

The clamour of the trumpets ceased, the drums were still; and, from a balustrade which ran round the ancient Town Hall, the King himself leaned, to greet his valiant nephew; and silently and slowly, their proud steeds reined in, Rupert, and his staff-officers, wound round the ruined Cross, and approached the

Town Hall: and there, for a few moments, halted.

At this moment, the eyes of all assembled were fixed, not upon the monarch, but upon him—on *him*, the darling of the vulgar—the brave, disinterested, and inconsistent Rupert. He was, in sooth, a noble being;—in stature, lofty—in countenance, beautiful*—youthful, for he was now only in his twenty-sixth year. The regular features were lighted up by an animated and intelligent expression, which told the observer that it was not only the dauntless general upon whom he looked, but on Rupert, the ingenious mechanic, the lover of the gentle arts—the inventor of several, from applying the power of observation worthily—the originator of the art of mezzotinto engraving, suggested, as it is well known, by seeing a soldier scrape rust off a gun-bar-

* It is not fair to adopt De Grammont's account of Prince Rupert. De Grammont, who describes the Prince as large and awkward, and simply, "not ugly," could have known Rupert only in the prince's old age, and (probably) after he had been employed in the sea service—not a beautifying process—by Charles the Second; and also, after Rupert's manners and, of course, countenance, were injured by constant association with a low-born mistress, Margaret Hughes. There are two incomparable portraits in Warwick Castle—one of Rupert, the other of Prince Maurice—both singularly handsome; and the only difficulty is to know which to admire the most, or to look at the longest.

rel. And it was these calm pursuits—it was his furnaces, in which he tried and found a new process for blasting rocks—his limning—his contrivances for perspective,—which, in spite of an education purely military, raised him so far above the mere soldier, that Rupert fought—not for the hope of gain—scarcely of glory. His home pursuits, his scientific toys, his mechanics, and his paintings, made him independent of that preferment and distinction which he scarcely prized: and with respect to the acquisition of wealth, he had the simplicity of a child; with regard to rank, the indifference of a philosopher.

The Prince now raised to the balustrade those dark hazel eyes, which were all mildness one moment—all fire the next; to darken the picture which a too partial pen may have drawn of him, it must be owned that the curled and finely-formed lips wanted not the moustache, of which they were destitute, to heighten, at times, a certain sarcastic look—a pettish, querulous expression—which came, like a shadow over a landscape, for an instant,—then went. And it must be avowed, that his manner, even when he addressed the King, was impatient, even discourteous ;

and that the roughness of the soldier—a soldier who began his career at fifteen—somewhat impaired the interest of the philosopher.

After a few moments of parley, the Prince, bowing low on his saddle, and replacing over his dark chestnut locks, a plumed hat, wheeled round. The dragoons drew up in a circle round the Market-place: they were in fine condition, despite their many battles, their journeys, and defeats; for, ever, as they went, fresh reinforcements had been poured in from the gentry of England. As yet, the Prince's dragoons looked what they were—stern, dauntless combatants, in the full vigour of life, *determined* to crush their foes.

A remnant of horse, in very different condition to Rupert's dragoons, now appeared at the opposite extremity of the Market-place. These were Colonel Hawkins' regiment, — battered, starved, half slaughtered, as they had been at the defence of Greenland House; and now, after their ineffectual labour, devoted anew to the siege of Basing.

Their commander was a veteran officer, whose forehead was seamed with wounds, whilst his worn and haggard face betrayed that it was not bodily evils alone that had

oppressed and saddened him. He was received with many cheers; for the brave Hawkins' successful efforts had been lauded far and near; and now he was going to offer the relics of his strength, the remnant of his troop, to a fresh and equally perilous service,—for, as yet, few of those who had attempted the relief of Basing had returned, and little assistance to the gallant besieged had been effected.

Colonel Hawkins, riding briskly up to the Town-hall, his head uncovered, saluted his majesty, who graciously returned the greeting; and then, amid deafening acclamations, turned into a narrow street, on his way to his quarters. Behind him, pale, melancholy, yet with that dignity which intellect ever gives, rode Sidney Godolphin. The elegance and gentleness of his deportment, the known valour of his conduct, won him some plaudits, but they were not unmingled with signs of disapproval; and Blanch, as she followed his receding figure with her eyes, and gazed unseen upon that speaking and loved countenance, fancied that she saw the pensive character of his expression darken into sadness—almost into gloom.

The military dispersed; the crowds

mingled together in groups; and Blanch, in sudden recollection of her situation, looked in vain for Nigel. He had not returned, as he promised, to lead her to a part of the town where Lord Lindesay, according to her appointment, was to meet and conduct her to the King.

At any other moment, the distress of one who was totally unaccustomed to solitude among a crowd—the worst of all solitudes—would have shocked and affrighted Blanch; but there was one overmastering feeling that checked even the passion of fear. She looked earnestly towards the road which Godolphin had taken.

“I must see him again! If not now, never!” and, with this exclamation, she rushed from the cross and walked rapidly through the crowded Market-place. Her hasty steps, yet lofty air, perhaps daunted those of the young gallants among the military who now sauntered through the town for recreation; for she passed unmolested, though perhaps not unobserved, through the throng, and came into a narrow street which led out of the town, into calm and pleasant meadows.

A party of officers who had just ridden from Oxford, crossed her path, as, scarcely

knowing why, Blanch looked from the right to the left, and fancied that in that quiet spot she might see Godolphin. In this expectation she withdrew her muffler; and a pair of dark bright eyes marked her movements. As she turned into a by-path, and saw, with some emotion, the placid waters of the Thames, flowing in calm contrast to the bustle and tumult of life, a hand was laid audaciously upon her arm. She turned, and saw General Goring.

She shrank from his grasp; she trembled, and grew pale at his address; and the general learned, from her reception, that one lesson,—that she had at least learned to dread him. Men of dissolute characters are vindictive when, for reasons which they can too well understand, they are repulsed by the innocent. They are wrathful that the character they take little pains to embellish by virtue should be treated like vice.

“I am chagrined,” said Goring, “Mistress Blanch, that I have disturbed you. Perhaps you have some pleasant assignation in these green meadows; else I had deemed it scarcely becoming, in a lady of condition, to venture among the rude soldiery alone.”

“I know not,” replied Blanch, colour-

ing, "who made you, General Goring, the arbiter of my conduct,—the judge of my actions. I am going," she added, walking very quickly and speaking very hurriedly, for there was something in Goring's manner which alarmed her much, "to place myself under the protection of my Lord Lindesay, who—"

General Goring interrupted her with an insulting laugh. "Yes, madam!" he retorted, with a freedom of manner which drove every tinge of colour from her cheeks. "We all know well that Lindesay will but be *too* happy to proffer his protection, but nothing more; he doth not affect marriage, Mistress Blanch—he doth not mean to play the Benedick, let Mistress Beatrice be ever so alluring—or so fond."

Blanch answered him with a look of such disdain, that Goring stopped short. Scarcely knowing whither she went, Blanch, followed by the strides of Goring, had advanced into the very midst of the meadow; a pathway crossed it, and, at the extremity of the path, there was a rude gate,—an object seldom seen in those days, when all enclosures were thrown down to make way for the march of troops.

Blanch recollected, as she went on and

on, all the stories she had heard of Goring's violent character; his odious addresses to herself were recalled, in sickening apprehension. There was in his manner a tone of insult, in his countenance a look of malignity, the effect of disappointment, that frightened her. An officer was standing, turned from her, leaning over the gate; in a moment of desperation she rushed towards this stranger, and caught him by the arm. A cry of delight broke from her;—it was Godolphin!

General Goring came up the moment she had reached the gate; he found her leaning on Godolphin's arm, clinging to it. There was a consciousness, a rapture on both countenances that told plainly the tale of affection; hopeless as it was, Goring viewed it with jealous spite. He looked at each of the parties for a few moments, and then, bowing low, said—

“Lord Lindesay, madam, had best know of the plight in which his young and fair charge now finds herself. Ladies of condition do not walk alone to no purpose; nor hath Master Godolphin left his former friends without being mighty certain of finding new ones in the court of his gracious majesty.”

"Stop!" cried Blanch, throwing herself before Godolphin, who, irritated by this sneer, advanced to Goring; "Oh, Godolphin, pardon him! forbear, and pity *me*!"

"Fear not, madam," said Goring, his dark eye turned fiercely on Godolphin, "I shall not fight *him*!" He spoke with that malignant contempt which looks so cool, but burns within, like volcanic fire. "He hath drawn his sword on his superior officer, but I take no note of a renegade."

"Godolphin! Godolphin!" screamed Blanch, as Godolphin endeavoured to pursue General Goring, who now walked away. "Ah! if ever you loved me, answer him not."

"I will not answer him; I am calm now," said Godolphin, turning back, and hastening to her. "See, he is gone now. Do not be afraid."

"Ah! now I hear thy voice; that has always comforted me," cried Blanch tenderly, "since the first time I heard it,—I am happy. Godolphin, wouldst thou have shunned me?"

"Why ask me, Blanch? I ought to do so, that thou knowest; and even now," replied Godolphin, as he sustained her who clung fondly to him, "I am acting a

faithless, a dishonourable part—a part I cannot justify to myself.”

He spoke in much agitation, and added, a few moments afterwards, more calmly, “Your good opinion must ever be dear to me, but your good name more. Let me restore you to Lord Lindesay.”

“Tell me that you are well—well in spirit,” said Blanch, as she walked by Godolphin (for they now walked towards the town), looking fondly at his half-averted face. “*You* do not mind the calumnies of the envious? They do not affect your peace?”

Godolphin turned his face towards her for a moment; a melancholy, almost a bitter, smile was her answer.

“Oh, I have heard with such indignation,” said Blanch, “the conjectures that I knew to be impossible; the statements I knew to be untrue; I have pined to tell thee that *I* did not believe them! I have panted and prayed for this moment, and it has come at last, Godolphin. Give me but the joy to know that you rise, in spirit, above all that dare to talk idly of your actions. You are happy, are you not?”

“I am happy in having so kind a friend!” replied Godolphin, with his usual

sweetness of manner, but scarcely looking at the bright and beautiful face of her whom honour forbade him to love.

"I know, if life be spared to thee," said Blanch with animation, "thou wilt outdo all those who now can talk but of thy former errors, and wot not of thy future greatness. If thou didst but know how I have yearned to say all this to thee!"

"I believe it, because I know thy good, true heart!" answered Godolphin in a low tone. "My fate, whatever it be, is blessed, since it hath had thy prayers! If to live be my lot, I hope to aid my sovereign's cause. If—" he began, but he broke off quickly, and did not pursue the remark.

"I see," said Blanch, sighing deeply, "that we must now say Farewell! Lord Lindesay will come to seek me. Ah! Mr. Godolphin, think sometimes of your poor prisoners of Wardour! Think of Frome! Think of the ramparts—of Cecily—of my aunt—of Blanch!"

"I shall, indeed," said Godolphin mournfully, "often! ever! It is of no use, Blanch," he resumed hurriedly, after a moment's reflection; "it is of no use striving to hide my feelings from thee:

—and yet I would rather die than act a dishonourable part!—I see Lord Lindesay cometh to seek thee—happily, ere I betray what I ought never to cherish. Let me hasten thee, my ever dear Blanch,” he added, whilst his voice trembled, “to Lord Lindesay! I shall have your prayers?” he added in a low tone; “and if, in the chances of life, we meet not again, you will not forget me?”

Blanch pressed the arm on which she leant in silence; and thus, sad, downcast, and conscious, the lovers were met by Lord Lindesay.

“I will release you, Mr. Godolphin, of your charge,” said the nobleman courteously but sternly. “Your troop is under arms!”

He spoke with a peremptory tone, and Godolphin’s high spirit, restrained only by the sweetness of a gentle temper, was displayed in his countenance.

“Mr. Godolphin,” said Lord Lindesay, a moment afterwards, recollecting himself, “you are appointed to a service of danger. It may chance that we may not meet again. Accept my good wishes. Do but at Basing what you have done at Greenland,—for there,” said Lord Lindesay, “you have left an established fame,

— and we shall, indeed, be proud of our convert.”

As Lindesay spoke he turned abruptly away. There was a decision in his manner that no one could withstand; and Blanch soon found herself far away from the meadows of Abingdon, and traversing the streets of that once-important town.

“ May I,” observed Lord Lindesay, as he walked by the side of Blanch, “ express, in brief, my surprise that a lady so allied, so nurtured in all propriety, should risk her own comfort, nay, her good repute, — perhaps her very safety, — in these disturbed days, by roaming alone, — or, worse, in the company of such a man as General Goring? — or of one to whom report attaches some surmises relating to yourself, — I mean, Mr. Godolphin?”

Lord Lindesay spoke gravely, but kindly; and Blanch hastened to thank him for his admonition.

“ Touching the last—Mr. Godolphin,” resumed Lord Lindesay, his voice low, and his accents faltering, “ *how* hath the rumour been set afloat? — by whom disclosed?”

“ My lord, I know not of what you speak; but this I do know,” replied

Blanch resolutely, "that whatever report hath alleged, Master Godolphin hath never spoken to me of love."

"It taxeth his honour greatly that it should be so rumoured," said Lord Lindsay gravely, "seeing that your betrothal to another person, — to one to whose family I hold myself bound for your well-being, — is in the public mind certain. You tell me the contract hath been annulled? Permit me the means to state such, and how; else —"

"— Else what?" cried Blanch, distressed, and looking earnestly in Lord Lindsay's face.

She had now, attended by Lindsay, reached a commodious house, where, for that night, the royal household were to rest, the King having important business to detain him during that day at Abingdon. Lord Lindsay did not reply until he found himself in an apartment alone with Blanch.

"What, my lord, mean you?" asked Blanch, in a tone somewhat resentful. "I refer you to Sir Edward Herbert. I am free!"

"Else," said Lord Lindsay, "I would say this,—a betrothed hath, to an honest mind, nay, in the eyes of law itself, the

binding nature of wedlock; and we well know that the addresses of another man, are not permitted to the betrothed. I own," added Lord Lindesay impatiently, "I long to see you within the walls of Ragland, to know that you are under the protection of your kinsfolk there, I had almost added, of your betrothed, and still, I trust, future, husband."

"Never!" exclaimed Blanch abruptly. She dashed the tears from her eyes, as she added, "Whatever censure may have been incurred in this business rests alone on *me*." She struggled with her feelings for an instant. "My lord, I value your good opinion; but I value it, not only for myself, but for Godolphin. Let me first speak of Edward—my cousin—my betrothed! O hateful custom! O dreaded name!—my bane! On my avowal that I could not love him, he gave me back our contract;—it is destroyed; but think not, my lord, *that* sets me free; there is a prohibition writ in heaven—a ban against which I dare not rebel!" She raised her hand as she spoke; her accents were solemn; and this reference to her sacred duty calmed and elevated her thoughts.

"All, then, is at an end—save pity, gra-

titude, and the poor privilege of following with my thoughts, my prayers, my hopes, him whom I have too fondly, too madly loved. If his future course be high, honourable, happy, I shall be content but to know it. It is in vain to talk; it is idle in Father Panzani to preach to me a conquest over my own heart! I cannot—I cannot. I have loved no other! But, my lord,” added Blanch, checking the vehemence of her manner, and speaking hurriedly,—“I grieve you; pardon me! I ask no counsel, my case admits of none. Let me go *home*.”

Lord Lindesay started from a deep reverie. “That is a point I have, I hope, accomplished. His majesty goeth hence to-morrow at dawn. By slow marches, he will reach Hungerford — there, we must part.”

“I thank you, my lord, for those kind accents,” said Blanch, as she looked up to the nobleman, of whom it was said, by a contemporary, “that his goodness was not made up of fine clothes and courtliness; and, that the confirmed goodness of his youth had not only guarded his mind from the temptation of vice, but secured his fame from the very suspicion of it.” (O rare praise!) “I thank you for

your sympathy, and—but, my lord, you are in tears.”

“ I blush for this weakness,” said Lord Lindesay hurriedly. “ It is your voice, your countenance, your manner, that have ever recalled to me one — now at rest—with whom some early passages of my life were associated:— she was not happy. But let us return to the actual concerns which must engage our thoughts. Sir Edward Herbert is to meet Gage’s regiment (speak it not!) near Aldermaston. The action finished, which I trust it will shortly be, as far as Basing House is concerned, Herbert can convoy you to your friends. The King, at my counsel, hath consented to permit you to go to Hungerford; not far from thence, a convent, spared at the entreaties of the town of Basingstoke, can shelter you with those of your faith, until Sir Edward can conduct you home. *He* as your kinsman — *he* as your betrothed, still, in public opinion — is best fitted for that office.”

“ I shall gladly follow your advice,” said Blanch cheerfully.

“ That is,” said Lord Lindesay smiling, “ if the chances of war will allow us to make plans for the future—plans which a single hour may mar.” He arose as he

spoke, and calling to a gentlewoman of the house to attend Mistress Blanch to her chamber, proffered his hand in token of a kind farewell; "You and I, for example, Mistress Blanch," said Lord Lindesay in a low tone, "may, perchance, never meet again to recall the singular confidence that has arisen between us. If we should, we shall be more fortunate than hundreds of those who have buffeted against the storms of these days. I commend thee solemnly," he said, looking up, as he held her hand in his, "not to the protection of saints, nor of ministering angels, but to Him who careth for the sparrow, and providently doth the raven feed!—Farewell!"

CHAPTER IX.

He who in impious times undaunted stood,
And 'midst rebellion durst be just and good ;
Whose arms asserted, and whose sufferings more
Confirm'd the cause for which he fought before,
Rests here.—

DRYDEN. *On the Marquis of Winchester.*

NOT ten days after the departure of Charles from Oxford, a party of military, decorated with orange-tawny scarfs and ribbons, after the fashion of the parliament-men, marched into the enclosure of Basing park, and there awaited the arrival of the reinforcement, which had been some days expected, from Oxford. The orange-tawny men were, in fact, Cavaliers, who had assumed those appendages, usually worn by the Roundheads, in order to secure their safe march from Winchester to Aldermaston, a village near Basing; their purpose being, to assist General Gage in forcing a passage through the enemy, in order to introduce supplies

of arms and ammunition into Basing House. But, as Fate would have it, their impetuous valour betrayed their secret; for, meeting with a body of Roundheads in that village, they had fallen upon them with fury, forgetting their assumed disguise, and remembering only that their opponents were Rebels, themselves Royalists; and, although victorious in the skirmish, their future safety, being but a band of two hundred and fifty horse, was thus put into jeopardy.

“I shall cast away my ribbons,” said the commander of the force to his aide-de-camp. “I detest them;” and, as he took off his helmet to detach a knot of the orange-tawny affixed to the plume, the countenance of Sir Edward Herbert was exposed to view. It was embrowned, as all others were, by sun and weather; it had acquired the aspect of a maturer age than the gallant young man could boast; it was manly, intelligent, and still, despite some lines of premature care, handsome; but it had no longer the happy, careless glance of the youth in the hunting-field at Compton Wynyates.—Fame had been honourably achieved, but with fame had arrived its concomitant, anxiety—that fiend which walks along in

mournful companionship with the gifted and the ambitious.

The day was warm, for spring was again advancing, and the troop of Herbert's Horse, as it was called, had selected the umbrageous canopy of some sycamore trees, beneath which a herd of deer had, ere the devastation of war began, formerly disported. Here, all around, facing the north, was verdant and imposing; whilst in front, on an eminence, rose the famous Donjon, or gate-house, of Basing, built in a circular form, and surmounted by four Norman pointed turrets; the whole encircled with a brick rampart, contrived by the skill of foreign engineers, beneath which flowed a moat, or rather canal, thirty-six feet deep. Thus divided from the baronial residence of the Marquis of Winchester was the Donjon; which was built round two courts, and embellished with lofty towers at each corner. To the north, again, stood that grave appendage to a Castle, the Grange; a tenement of no small importance, severed by a wall and common road from its protecting fortress, and watered by a flowing rivulet, which separated it from Courdray Down. Such were the outlines of that noble structure, which now, for

nearly two years, had repelled the assaults of Parliamentary force, resisting the dread Sir William Waller, whom its garrison drove back to Farnham, and holding out to the last days of monarchy;—such the spot where Elizabeth had royally entertained, at the expense of a former marquis, a French ambassador, the Duc de Biron, and where she had, in the height of her good humour, committed the excess of making ten knights at one time. Such was Basing — starved at length into subjection, its inmates massacred, its walls destroyed by the ruthless power of Cromwell, who burnt it to the ground. There it rose in its pride, covering, within its outworks, a space of fourteen acres; lordly on its eminence, a residence, as even its destroyers termed it, “fit for an emperor;” its master beloved and revered. Yet, ere long, sounds of horror were heard, not on its strong ramparts alone, but issuing from the dark vaults beneath the Castle, where a massacre, so foul and fierce, that Englishmen may blush to recall the deeds of cowardly vengeance, was perpetrated in subterranean darkness,—men crying in vain for quarter! Ere long, that proud donjon was but a mass of stones; the walls of Basing crumbling

in their nakedness, its rich furniture sold by piecemeal, not a bar of iron left in the noble windows; and nothing was to be heard amidst the traces of those once splendid chambers, save the blasts of wind which added desolation to desolation.

"Is it true," asked Sir George Wharton, of Herbert, "that the Marquis is busy engraving the words '*Aimez loyauté*' with a diamond on every window since he last repulsed the White and Blue regiments? This noble peer," pursued Wharton, observing that his friend, and now superior officer, was abstracted,— "is somewhat different from his ancestor, in Elizabeth's times, who boasted that he had retained his prosperity, not by being 'an oak, but an osier.'"

"—It is he! It is Gage!" exclaimed Herbert, not heeding Wharton, and throwing his eye-glass to his aide-de-camp. "Now—stay—let us have no mistakes again. Let all the orange-tawny scarfs be first taken off, or our friends may again mistake us for our foes. The word," added the young officer, raising his voice, "is 'Saint George!' So let not our men, and General Gage's," he added, as if speaking to himself, "fall foul of each other, for want of distinction."

Thus saying, Herbert rode forwards gallantly at the head of his cavalry. Resolute and calm was his aspect; his whole soul—such is the nature of true genius—and his was military genius,—was in the action of the day. Experience had added years to the young head; necessity had taught him to depend upon the resources of his own mind. There was something fine in the gay, ardent manner in which he, and his self-raised and self-maintained corps, advanced to meet the regular brigade which Charles, who had marched to Hungerford, had despatched to the succour of Basing; in the hope—and a desperate hope it seemed, of effectually succouring the gallant and besieged marquis, whose ammunition was now nearly exhausted.

General Gage, who had first purposed to divide his forces, and to fall upon the enemy's encampment in Basing park in several different places, announced to Sir Edward Herbert, as they met, and parleyed, that his plans of attack were changed, and that he had resolved to fall jointly, with all his body, on one place; and, with this intent, he ordered the men to be ranged in battalions, placing Sir Edward Herbert on the right wing, with

the horse—on the left, Colonel Hawkins; whilst General Gage himself led the foot. Then the gallant Sir Henry Gage, planting his forces in a large open field, rode from one squadron to another, giving them the word—"St. George!" and commanding each man to tie a piece of white ribbon on his right arm, above the elbow.

The royalists now marched towards the house; when, at the upper end of the field, upon a slight eminence, was discerned a body of five troops of horse, standing to receive them: between this body of horse and General Gage's troops there was a narrow lane lined with musketeers of the Parliament's forces; and, it was necessary to pass between the two hedges, thus fatally prepared, ere an impression could be made upon the five troops of horse.

It was a service of danger—almost of certain destruction; and General Gage paused; he was a merciful and gentle man, of consummate prudence; yet there was no other way up to the enemy's entrenchments except through this narrow pass. Ere the general had come to any decision, an officer of Colonel Hawkins' division rode up to him, and, taking his helmet off his head, besought permission

to head the first body of horse that should attempt to pass the lane.

"Captain Godolphin," said Sir Henry Gage, "you are not the first—my friend here to the right hath made a similar request. But I think," added the general, after a few moments' hesitation, "there are some considerations which give to *you* the preference. — A deadly one!" General Gage observed to his aide-de-camp, as Godolphin, bending respectfully, rode back, and gave the intelligence to his company. The champaign field in which the troops were arranged rang with one loud cheer; the woods echoed to the sound; the deer fled back into the glades. It was the last sound of the human voice that was heard for many hours. Not many moments afterwards, the company that Godolphin commanded rode into the narrow road which led to their destruction; — volleys were heard, fired by the musketeers; they were sustained gallantly, — a road was made, — the firing lessened, — and now General Gage prepared to march onwards, and to follow with his foot.

Sir Edward Herbert, disappointed, remained in the field with his division. "Godolphin," he said mournfully, to

Wharton, "will achieve the honour; yet I grudge it him not."

"No, nor I!" said Wharton, "for he will not live to enjoy it."

"See!" cried Herbert, after an interval of anxious waiting; "the brave Godolphin has prevailed, he has forced a passage down the lane,—he has gained the foot of the hill. There! there! see he rides towards the enemy's cornets!—your glass, Wharton! Why is this so dim? He has charged them, by my troth! would I were there too! gallant, brave Godolphin!"

"It is a good way to wipe off old stains," said Sir George Wharton, who, like Herbert, felt considerable disappointment in not having the glory of the undertaking. "Some say Godolphin is like to seek his death, and that he careth not for life. This seemeth like it."

"He hath no stain to wipe off, sir," replied Edward resentfully. "He is brave and—who is that that hath fallen from his horse on yon hill, Wharton? There is confusion! they are bearing him down the slope! It is some officer. I miss—I miss the white eagle on Godolphin's colours;—stay, there it is again."

"It is no great matter, some one must

fall," said Wharton, coolly, "and Godolphin hath not the stars in his favour—last night, towards the eleventh hour, Saturn, whose orb—"

"We are ordered to march forward, Wharton," interrupted Herbert; "I see the general's signal, and here comes his aide-de-camp. Now, brave boys! on for Basing House. St. George! my men!—On! on!" Even whilst he spoke, Colonel Herbert rode on, followed by the wing of horse; and soon a fresh and dire charge was heard from the musketeers—and soon, the plumed helmets of Herbert's horse were seen rising between the hedges of the lane. The foot, who had already disputed the passages, and had been beaten from hedge to hedge, had reached a safe place. Few of the enemy's musketeers were left to defend the pass, and in no greater space of time than two hours, the whole of General Gage's force was securely planted within a mile of the besieged fortress of Basing.

Meantime, a very different scene was enacted not far from the fatal and famous lane, so gallantly disputed. Upon a hill, to the north of Basingstoke, about a mile from that ancient town—the key to the West, as it was considered during the

rebellion—there stood, until the time of the civil wars, a sacred edifice—the Chapel of the Holy Ghost. A turret, of hexagonal form, surmounted by the hallowed dove, and connected with a long nave, beautifully adorned by six pointed arches, denoted a spot, famous, in what the Roman Catholics term the ages of faith, for pilgrimages; honoured, as some might think, by the worship there of seven Saxon kings.

The chapel, beautiful in its proportion, stood near an ancient house of free-stone, in which dwelt the Fraternity and Sisterhood of the Guild, also bearing the holy designation, the Brethren and Sisterhood of the Order of the Holy Ghost. They were a pious, useful, industrious community, whose conventual lands had been restored to them by Philip and Mary; and fresh estates had been granted to them; the privilege of forming their own laws had also been revived; and thus, quiet and unpretending, the once-dissolved monastery had reared and maintained its head amid contentious times, and had been proved too useful (as perhaps some such institutions may be) to be abandoned by the lords of the soil,

who had willingly heretofore protected the poor Fathers.

The benefit was now returned : the Fraternity of the Guild received into their Guest-hall the officers of such reinforcements as had, from time to time, been despatched to the garrison at Basing; they laid open their dormitories to the wounded; they permitted even their chapel to be plundered of its leaden roof, in order to make bullets for the besieged.

Last, not least, there was a quiet enclosure in which the Fraternity gave a final home to those who had suffered in the good cause—their burying-ground; many were the fresh mounds there within the previous year; many the humble crosses that rose above the head-stone; many the masses and requiems that had been sung beneath the vaulted roof of the chapel adjacent, for those who had been killed at Basing.

And now a fresh demand was made upon the hospitality of these charitable Brothers. The King, as they were duly informed, after marching with a large body of troops to Hungerford, had proceeded thence towards Marlborough, on

his road to the south; but, first, he had disposed of several ladies of noble families, who had quitted Oxford under the protection of the army. Amongst these was Blanch Somerset.

To restore Blanch to her family was at that juncture impossible; for Bristol was not then retaken, and all Somersetshire was in the power of the Roundheads. But Charles had kindly adopted a middle course to procure the safety of the young damsel. He had recommended her to take refuge, until better times should supervene, with the holy Sisters at Basingstoke. "There," said the monarch, "thou wilt be with those of thine own communion; there thou wilt not be afar off from one, who, if I mistake not, hath a right to guard thee from danger,—Sir Edward Herbert."

It was an easy journey from Hungerford; and Blanch, availing herself of a convoy of soldiers, found herself at the foot of that gentle acclivity on which the Convent of the Holy Ghost was situated, before noon;—on that very morning on which the wearers of the orange-tawny scarfs had rested beneath the sycamore trees in Basing Park. The yellow furze clothed the banks of the gentle ascent,

as Blanch, alighting from her horse, consigned it to Nigel, and bade him ride on, and prepare the Sisters for the reception of a stranger.

Nigel, for it was near noon, and consequently dinner-time, obeyed promptly, and left Blanch to her reflections. They were broken by her passing the farm subsidiary to the monastery, which stood near the bridle-road which she pursued. Implements of husbandry and churns were visible in the farm-yard; broods of poultry, flocks of geese, and cows, and sheep, bore witness that, as yet, this abbatial possession had not been ransacked by hostile troops. These scenes of peace and plenty—strange associations in those times—brought back some pleasing, some poignant recollections to the mind of Blanch. She, who was now on her way to beg a lodging and protection from the poor Sisters on the hill, reverted to the home of her youth; and the contrast was too painful to be indulged.

She sat down on a grassy bank,—for in those holy precincts she felt herself safe,—to look upon the fair country beyond. To the south, in the distance, rose dimly to her sight, the high turrets of Basing. There was a winding road; there were

trees before the rough fore-ground of the hilly common on which Blanch sat, and, between her view, the commanding fortress, from every turret of which banners floated in the gale. But presently, amid the woods, a smoke arose, sounds of cannonade were heard, the scared birds flew aloft, and Blanch, affrighted as they were, started from her seat, and rushed forward towards the convent.

An aged Brother of the fraternity, working peacefully in a small garden, guarded the young stranger from two fierce bull-dogs, and in a few minutes she found herself in the Guest-hall. No questions were asked. She was a stranger, a traveller, and wanted shelter; it was given, in the name of all that was sacred, to a pilgrim in life's paths. And she received it in the same good faith in which it was bestowed.

Here Blanch contemplated remaining until her own family, her uncle of Worcester, or his son, could enable her by means of some convoy to return to Ragland, or until Sir Edward Herbert could escort her to her home. In the Guest-hall, into which she had been admitted, all was calm, and in such order as a life of system best promotes; yet it was, never-

theless, easy to see that the holy Sisters were disturbed—I will not call it alarmed—by some tidings which they had received. They spoke little; but Blanch soon perceived that they were ready, should some expected intelligence arrive, to betake themselves to their Sanctuary.

All day long the Brothers of the Fraternity who dwelt under the care of their Warden, on the opposite side of the court, were watchfully looking through spy-glasses in the direction of Basing;—the noon-day meal was scarcely allowed to interrupt certain preparations which Blanch could not then well comprehend—they were for the accommodation of the wounded, or the dying; and the Sisters, as well as the Brothers of the Guild, were actively employed in these mournful preparations.

Towards evening, Blanch, after repairing to the chapel,—to the shrine where her devotions were poured forth,—went out to walk in the cloister which ran along each side of the convent; and in which visitors, as well as the Brethren, on that side—the Sisters on the other—were permitted to recreate themselves.

Two Brothers were here employed in observations. They were monks of a su-

perior intelligence, and were regarded by the rest of the Guild with the respect that the weak show to the strong, whether in physical or intellectual force. They had now discarded their scapulars, or working-dress, and had assumed their more full-dress costume,—if such an expression be not deemed irreverend—the cowl.

“The Royalists,” observed one of these Brethren, who, in virtue of their being of the Cistercian order, wore picturesque cassocks of white cloth, girded with wool-len cords, over which fell a large black cape, surmounted with a hood or cowl—“the Royalists were distinguished by a white ribbon tied round their arms. Canst thou see where Herbert’s troop is planted?”

“No,” replied the other Brother; “but I could discern, not an hour ago, a body of five cornets of Horse standing upon yon hill—very full, and in good order—to receive Gage’s men. The Roundheads may be espied by means of their orange-tawny scarfs, floating in the breeze. But see! here come tidings of the forces.”

At this instant, a horseman rode briskly towards the convent, waving his hand as he spoke, to enforce a quicker attention. “Make all ready there; we are

bringing some of the wounded to ye, holy Father," added the soldier, dropping from his horse, and bending before the monk. "*Benedicite!*"

"*Dominus sit vobiscum,*" returned the Cistercian, placing both his hands on the head of the trooper.

"How goes the day?"

"Bravely!" the soldier pointed as he spoke to the south, where, now, nought but smoke could be seen; hiding the boundary of the horizon, and enveloping the woods of Basing in obscurity.

"The general could not get to attack the enemy on the hill," he continued, breathlessly, "but he must needs pass through two hedges lined very thick with musketeers—in that direction! So he sent a Forlorn Hope to fight their way to the stand of pikes thou hast perhaps noted, just on the rise."

"We have so," replied the Brother of the Guild.

"By whom,—by whom headed?" cried Blanch, in a tone so frantic and impassioned, that the two Brethren—aged men, and now for more than a year accustomed to scenes of battle strife—looked at her, affrighted for her reason.

"I could not hear," replied the sol-

dier; "but this I heard, the brave lads bore a smart volley from the enemy, then charged the enemy's horse so fiercely that, though many on both sides fell, they gave ground, and—you had best retire, lady; they are now bringing some of our wounded here. I must return—General Gage will make his quarters in Basingstoke to-night—there will be a guard here to protect ye, I am ordered to say!" shouted the impatient horseman, as he galloped down the hill and left the precincts of the convent as calm and still as heretofore.

The Brethren resumed their eye-glasses: nor heeded the restless stranger, flitting now here, now there, straining her eyes to catch any object that might allay the gnawing anguish of suspense.

"Godolphin was to join General Gage;" she repeated to herself a thousand times. "Can I be sure of that? Can they have been deceived, or deceived me? Now is the time," she thought, and the colour flushed her cheek, "when he may redeem his good name. Yes! The slanderers shall be abashed; they shall confess themselves ashamed." The thought sustained her, and a feeling like hope gave a stimulus to her failing spirit. Night

found her still pacing the now dark cloister—still looking towards Basing, still listening for the sounds of horsemen coming up the hill. At last the wheels of some slow vehicle were heard—it was the cart bringing the wounded and the dead among the private soldiers, whilst a litter or two followed, carrying those of higher rank. The attendants were loquacious, even merry, for the arms of General Gage had been successful; and private misery is soon forgotten in public success. Blanch shrank back for an instant to listen to the discourse of those who passed her slowly. In the gloom her white dress could scarcely be discerned, she thought, and she sank behind a buttress and listened with breathless attention.

“He fought like a Cavalier, that is all,” said one voice. “It was a pity he fell so soon; never was there a tougher combat.”

“—So the house was gained at last,” exclaimed another officer; “Colonel Herbert had that honour: the enemy’s foot went from hedge to hedge, and they did not retire to their works and quarters in less than two hours.”

As this voice ceased, the horsemen, who were few in number, rang at the

convent gate, and were welcomed with the usual "*Dominus sit vobiscum*" uttered in rain and sunshine—sickness and health—joy and sorrow, by the holy Brethren. And then the wounded and the dying were lifted out carefully by the attendant Brethren into their infirmary—those who had ceased to breathe were removed elsewhere.

"There is another litter to come anon," said a rough voice. "And now give us refreshment—we are nigh to faint!—'Tis a day to be marked with a white stone!—But are you prepared for all our wounded?—some fifty or sixty.—Nearly all the Forlorn Hope are hurt, in some measure—the dead have not yet been sorted."

"Aye the house was gained," was the answer to some eager questions.—"Sir Edward Herbert got a free entrance at last, but stayed only long enough to put in the supplies of ammunition—twelve barrels of powder, twelve hundred weight of match, and—"

Blanch heard no more. She sprang from her retreat;—the darkness of the night, the presence of soldiery elated by brilliant success—danger, even disgrace, which women fear much more, were forgotten; she stole into the court.

The convent was built in a square, one end open and guarded by strong gates. One side of the tenement was assigned to the Sisters, the other to the Brethren. In the centre was the hospital, a building formerly used for offices and store-houses, but now appropriated solely to the unfortunate. There were Sisters in the Convent who devoted themselves exclusively to those arts which men have since monopolized. These, in their white tunics and black girdles—similar to the monks—and partly covered with their dark mantles, mingled with the lay-sisters in those offices of the healing art of which education first instilled a knowledge—in which experience, alas! had made them proficient.

Sorrow has its instincts; as Blanch crept into the Infirmary, her dress dank with the dews of night,—her hood falling back from her brows,—her gaze wild, and, raising her clasped hands, entreated that she might be permitted to stay there during the night—one face seemed to her kinder than the rest: it was that of a nun who was superintending the *vestiaria*, or wardrobe; who was, therefore, to a certain extent, endowed with authority, and a number of novices, votaries to the profession of surgery, awaited her directions.

Her face was of that calm and comfortable middle age which inspires confidence; her manner grave, but not stern; her eye kind; for she had known the ties of kindred; she had endured the pangs of separation; she was a soldier's daughter, the last of her race—father, brother, all had died at Basing.

“—And wherefore,” asked the woman, looking on Blanch for an instant, then rolling with nimble fingers bandages round and round,—“desirest thou to stay here? Hast thou any kindred nigh to Basing? ’Tis against our discipline; nay, thou must remain here no longer, or I shall be reproved of our warden,” continued the Sister, placing folds upon folds of lint—(alas! the sight was sickening)—and giving it to a novice with this word of meaning—“Despatch!”

“I have,” replied Blanch hesitatingly, “a kinsman, by name Edward Herbert; who, as I have learned, marched the reinforcement sent by Sir William Ogle from Winchester this very day.”

“He hath done notable feats since noon, as Father Francis hath reported to us; it was he who forced the way into Basing House. Be not concerned about *him*,—he is safe.”

“—And is to keep guard here this very night, to protect us poor sisters and the wounded, as I have heard,” said a lay sister.

“I thank Heaven that he is safe,” replied Blanch, looking down, “but—”

“As how?” inquired the sister of the *vestiarium*, “hast thou nearer, dearer kindred than Herbert, in Gage’s regiment? Name them—thou art not alone in sorrow,” pursued the good Madeline, for such was her name, in a low tone.

“No,—I have no kinsman nigh to Basing;” and Blanch, confused and ashamed of her own anxiety, turned away.

The sister resumed her occupation; perhaps she guessed the source of the young and fair girl’s pale face and tearful eyes, for she said, a few moments afterwards, “Thou canst not remain here; but, should any ask for thee, what is thy name?”

“Blanch Somerset,” returned Blanch eagerly,—she stopped short; her whole frame shook with emotion; she grasped the arm of Madeline. “Sister, if thou hast any heart;—if ever thou hast known suspense, bring tidings to me should there be one—I know not that I should

speak his name. In brief—there is—there is one dearer to me than life,” she cried, bursting through all the bonds of caution, and speaking with the vehemence of her nature—“there is one, I know, who hath fought where, as I hear, many have fallen !”

“Should *he* have fallen,” replied the Sister, looking gravely at Blanch, “it is not certain that he would be brought *here*; there are not, it is true,” added Madeline, “such dressers as the Sisters of the Guild are reputed to be. It was for their holy works,” and the conventual *esprit de corps* rose up amid a host of Christian virtues in Madeline’s pure heart as she spoke (that one error was venial); “it was for our charitable deeds that our house was spared, even until King Edward’s impious time.”

“Then thou thinkest that, if wounded, he may be brought here?” gasped Blanch: “O sister, *if* he should be wounded—if he be in sorrow, I may fly to him! Shouldst thou see one among those thou tenderest, nobler than the rest,—gentler, kinder,—less fit to live in a world where he has met much of injury,—more fit to die than the ruder crew,—he is my—my own Godolphin !”

"Poor child!" exclaimed sister Madeline; for Blanch, weeping as she spoke, threw herself in her impassioned grief into the Sister's arms. "Poor young creature! How? Name him again!"

"He is of gentle blood," resumed Blanch eagerly; "of a noble aspect;"—she paused;—"there be few like him—thou wilt surely learn his name, for I will venture to affirm," she added proudly, "that his deeds have made that known. But why grieve I?—perchance, perchance he may be safe!"

"I have not heard his name," replied Madeline, addressing the sisters around her. "If he should come here, I will not fail to tell him that thou art near him; and now, hie thee hence! and trust to Madeline!"

"One word, Sister;—I have no claim of kindred on him whose name I have uttered; perhaps he may not desire to see me! O thou hast known youth! should he hesitate—yet, no! Shall Godolphin suffer—and *can* I be absent from his side?"

"I understand," returned Madeline, "but I am loth to be chidden, even for pity's sake,—therefore, my child, prythee withdraw."

Blanch followed the direction of the Sister's extended hand, and, quitting the hospital, she returned into the convent, for she knew monastic rules to be imperative:—uncompromising as whirlwinds, fixed as fate, and sternly regardless of individual feelings. To subvert all inclination to one clock-work principle, she was aware, from her early education, to be the essence of conventual establishments. She remained to the chamber allotted to her in the dormitory. The bed was not of straw, like that of the other females, but downy, and warm—for every principle of hospitalitv was conformed to. But Blanch might have envied the calm sleepers on those hard beds their slumbers of apathy. Hour after hour she lay, listening for the next cart or litter that should bring the wounded: she scarcely slept,—starting when but a bird twittered in the chimney eaves, and screaming when the dormitory bell rang smartly to midnight prayers. It was a comfort to hear the nuns hasten from their cells and hurry off to the chapel—would she could have heard the notes of their voices attuned to hymn the praise of that High Ruler of the universe, whose wise intentions they thus manifestly perverted, by break-

ing the slumbers which He has given to our nature to enjoy, one of Heaven's kindest gifts to man!

The matins rang cheerily, and Blanch, just sinking into an uneasy sleep, remembered her duties, and arose to dress. She arose with a dire recollection of appalling dreams—Godolphin had stood by her side, but he was cold, wan, speechless! What could this mean?—why was her reason tortured thus? She tried to pray, but the rosary fell from her fingers; she essayed to raise her eyes and heart to the crucifix, but a shivering seized her frame, her very lips were benumbed. She started up from her knees—the matins' bell had ceased, and Blanch sat down upon her bed, irresolute whether, at that late hour—for it was many minutes after three—to repair to the chapel, or to remain to pray, and try to pray alone.

She was greeted at this moment by a welcome voice—"The night-watch is over;—the guard are about to depart for Basingstoke, and thy kinsman, young sister, whom thou hast named to me, prayeth some words with thee ere he goes hence."

"My kinsman, Edward?"

"Ay;" and Madeline entered as she spoke. "Let us take this lamp, for it

is not yet light, and the wind blows cold along these passages," said the Sister.

"Thou art cold, Sister," said Blanch, whose apprehensive mind looked upon every circumstance as bearing on her own fate—"why,—why shudderest thou?"

"I do not shudder; but the morning is chill," replied Madeline, without looking at the inquiring Blanch.

"Thou hast been up, then, all the night?—thou hast seen, perchance, him of whom I spoke, Sister?—*I* have seen him! and he looked pale, and smiled not.—It was before the matins' bell rang—Why did it ring so loud?—Oh, why was I awakened?"

"I have been busy all the night, but I am used to it," replied the Sister.—"The wounds have been very grievous, sad, and dangerous," continued Madeline, walking on rapidly; "the afflicted ones are many—some are at rest in the Lord—others—but thy kinsman is awaiting thee. Let us speak not—our superior else—" She did not finish her sentence.

The Sister led Blanch into the locutory, and left her there, where, wrapped in a furred cloak, and fully armed, Edward Herbert awaited his once-betrothed cousin.

Under any other circumstances, a con-

strait must have rendered the meeting painful—but sorrow has no forms; and Blanch, a stranger, and in trouble, clung to the arm of her kinsman, and looked to him for support and comfort. “Thou hast been here all night,” she said, shuddering as she spoke. “What a night it has been! I have not slept—then it was thy horse’s tramping hoofs I heard some time beneath my lattice.”

“Did that disturb thee?” asked Edward, looking with uncontrolled affection and interest upon the drooping and shivering Blanch, whose countenance, he knew not why, had an expression that alarmed him. “Thou wert alarmed?”

“No,” replied Blanch, sadly, “not for myself. The day went with *us*?” she added, after a pause. “The King’s side was the *most* successful—was it not so, Edward?—Yet how, why were there so many wounded? Speak! tell me!” she exclaimed, suddenly springing up, “what means that silence?—that look?”

“Nought that bodes ill, dear Blanch,” returned Edward, taking her hand, for all that had been painful and unkind was forgotten in that hour of peril and excitement—“nought that bodes ill to *us*. We have lost no kindred here!”

“What means that restless eye? that scared, wild glance?” thought the young soldier, for he knew not that Godolphin was his rival. Such were the sentiments of Blanch, such her enthusiasm for the royal cause, that Edward judged that some Cavalier had ensnared the heart of his betrothed; and the misery pictured in the face of Blanch was not explained to Edward’s mind. Lord Lindesay, on whom his suspicions rested, was not in the skirmish near Basing-House.

“I am better now,” said Blanch, answering the inquiring look which recalled her suddenly to herself. “And tell me Edward, how went the action of the day? Who”—the words were uttered with a convulsive choking — “who led the Forlorn Hope, which—which forced a passage through the lane?—who—I—I am very ill!” she gasped out, and sank to the ground.

Edward raised her in his arms. They were alone; the grey light of morning streamed in upon the death-like face which he had loved, and still loved, so fondly. Life has many moments of bitterness, but the young soldier had felt none like *this*. Mercifully, there was *female* aid; for man may pity—it is for woman to succour and restore, and Ma-

deline, summoned by a cry of anguish from Edward, entered the room.

"This cometh," she said gravely, looking at the fair young creature, whose head rested on the shoulder of her kinsman, "of disobeying the rules of our institution, and leaving strangers to parley alone."

"Thou shalt not take her from me!" exclaimed Edward violently, clasping to his heart the unconscious, insensible form; "and yet—"

"Dost thou wish to kill her?" asked Madeline. "Seest thou not that she will *die*, if cordials and prescribed remedies be not administered? Leave her — or bear her, if thou wilt, to my chamber; there she will be safe, and I will tend her." She spoke with the strongest authority, that of common sense — and Edward obeyed the commands of the Sister.

CHAPTER X.

Youth may revel, yet it must
Lie down in a bed of dust.
Earthly honours flow and waste ;
Time alone doth change and last.

The Broken Heart—FOLD.

AND the good Sister kept her word; and the stricken one was tended with a steady care that many in the chambers of the great, nursed by hireling aid, might envy. And, in time, that care, and the simple skill of the poor Sister of the Guild, did avail: but a dark and fearful interval—an interval of suspended reason, and of incessant, though not high, delirium, long rendered the result uncertain.

Meantime all was restored to seeming peace within the precincts of the convent fraternity. The troops, it is true, commanded by General Gage, were still quartered in Basingstoke; but their object had been gained; Basing was reinforced, and the besiegers went on languidly; and afterwards, wearied out, suspended their

operations. And gay flags were seen flying from the turrets of Basing House; and there were sports and revelings among the Royalists within the town; and the blue smoke was again beheld curling from the lowly, and, of late, deserted villages; and the sounds of rural occupations were heard once more.

And now, from the hospital of the convent, the wounded were daily removed to return to their employments; the dead were carried out to the enclosure of the burial-ground. These were, in most instances, borne to their graves on an open bier, resting on trestles, as is still the case in Catholic countries; and there, where many crosses rose, the valiant soldiers who had fought to save Basing were interred.

One day, however, the good Sisters and the Brethren stood in their respective cloisters to view a mournful and unusual sight; it was the funeral of an officer, and, unlike those who had died in the faith of the Romish church, *his* remains were to be carried to a small enclosure not far from the Grange, which had been recently consecrated for the purpose—for the churchyard at Basingstoke was not always at the command of the Royalists,

—and where some of the Cavaliers slept with their former companions in battle.

The procession went slowly down the hill. It differed from all preceding ones, from there being no Brethren amongst those who followed it. It was that most touching of all funereal processions, simply a soldier's funeral. And soon the young officer who walked after the coffin, which was borne by soldiers, with his head lowered and his sword pointed to the ground, and a scarf tied round his arm, for he was chief mourner, was lost—even he, tall as he was—amid the furze and feathery birches which sprang up amid the light soil of the common; and the horse of the deceased, its saddle vacant, led by his servant;—and his sword carried after the coffin; and the soldiers, with their pikes inclined to the ground—and the drums muffled—and all those accustomed infringements upon the usual military bearing, which tell so forcibly to the heart the tale of death, were seen no more. A few wind-instruments, playing softly a mournful march, were heard, indeed, ever and anon, as the funeral procession veered its course, wafted by the breeze to the ear of those who listened to its notes, and succeeded, now and then,

by a few solemn beats upon the muffled drum :—and then all was still !

Presently, as the Sisters, curious to see the procession, yet little interested in the rites of one whom they deemed a heretic, had retired to their occupations, another sound was heard—once—twice—the firing of a gun over the soldier's grave—thrice!—it is over!—all is over! The dead is entombed—the attendants disperse—the military return, bearing their arms aloft: it is over! and the “place thereof shall know him no more!”

One person only remains near the new grave :—and who can enter into *his* feelings? for he was not a kinsman of the deceased. Why doth he sorrow? Alas! he envieth him who is at rest!

The solemn beat of the muffled drum, the wailing of the Dead March, awakened from her dreary slumbers one over whom Madeline had watched, night and day, now for many days. She awoke, not as usual from sleep, with a scream, but with a smile. Her soft eyes sought those of Madeline.

“Thou hast slept long; try to slumber again!” said Madeline, turning from her,—for the good Sister's heart was wrung by the unconsciousness of her patient of that

which had occurred—an unconsciousness preserved by a merciful intention.

“What sweet sounds!” and Blanch raised herself from her pillow to listen. “Hark! But how sad! I have heard such once before.”

“Well, well!—try to sleep again!” said Madeline, sitting down by the bed; “try to sleep, and do not thou conjure up sad thoughts.”

“O no! for I am happy now! They cannot—” and Blanch fixed her eyes upon Madeline, and smiled as she spoke; but the smile did not impart pleasure to the kind Sister’s heart, — “they cannot say he is not brave!—they cannot take away his honour now!”

“Do not speak of him!” said Madeline, who had been present at a very painful scene between Blanch and Herbert, in the course of her attendance upon the sick girl, who, in a paroxysm of her malady, had divulged her secret attachment, and whom the generous Herbert had soothed by eulogizing the honour and bravery of Godolphin. “Do not speak of *him*! It vexeth thy cousin.”

“But I may think of him! dream of him—see him! Sister Madeline?”

“See him? Thou dost not see him

now?" returned Madeline. With awe she spoke—for the superstitions of the times led her to give credence to the frequent assertions of Blanch, that Godolphin had hovered near her, in the spirit.

"When do I not see him—think of him?" answered Blanch, smiling; but the smile had something weak in its expression, the wandering eye was vacant. Madeline was distressed; she withdrew from the bedside, and wept.

"Hark! a gun-shot! Oh! I know," screamed Blanch, "there is fighting near!" She sprang up, and sat upright in her bed. "No matter! *He* has courage—*he* can meet the parliament-men any day! And yet, I do not like that gun."

"Only," said Madeline, "a poor soldier's funeral." She thought within herself, "shall I unfold to her now what she must *soon* know?" She looked at the pale face and restless eye, and answered that question to herself: "Not yet."

Blanch lay still many minutes. All fever had now gone, but still the pulse was high, the patient generally sleepless, sometimes incoherent, sometimes violent. Madeline's skill could do no more. She had called in Father Francis, and his discipline was of a moral nature.

"Tell her the *truth*," said the honest man. "I have known such ailments cured by certainty. Trust me, she believeth not to a surety, that he lives. She will be better when she shall know *all*."

All day Blanch's thoughts ran upon those gun-shots. Towards afternoon she was permitted to sit up. This boon, she knew not why, had hitherto been denied her. She availed herself of it to look through the small window, in every direction.

"I see no marks of a bullet-shot. I see no traces of troops having marched this way—what could it be?" And suspicions and fancies distracted her all the evening.

The next day Blanch was better, more composed; less inquiring, less suspicious; and Edward Herbert, who snatched a few moments from military duties, and who had received orders to march that very day towards Gloucester, received this favourable account with gratitude. "Tell her," he said to Sister Madeline, ere he rode away, "I shall shortly return, to convey her to Ragland."

He departed. And now arose a difference of opinion between Father Francis and Sister Madeline.

"I cannot tell her the truth," argued the Sister. "I cannot tell her the circumstances of that dreadful night—the agonies of that fine young man—his moans! I hear them still. And she will ask me all!"

Father Francis shook his head. "It is time now that she should know the truth," was his invariable answer. "And, Sister, rich and poor, high and low must bear the common lot in these perilous times. Is she a solitary sufferer?"

"Could she but have seen him!" said Madeline.

"Nay—to have kept one sad image in her mind's eye till death! Trust me, they who receive not the parting breath are spared many after throes," replied the father. He sighed, and walked forth into his plot of garden, to soothe some remembrances by activity of body.

Madeline repaired to the chamber where Blanch sat, and she entered it fully impressed with her painful duty. The Sister was a simple, homely creature, with a short, quick manner, but a heart replete with kindly feelings, which had their natural vent—since Madeline was now nearly desolate in the world—in deeds of kindness.

She therefore paved the way cautiously, for a disclosure to the unhappy invalid, of what had occurred,—the death of Sidney Godolphin. For the recent illness, and present susceptibility of the young stranger required the greatest circumspection. Her mind, long harassed by self-reproach and anxiety, had received more injury than even her health of body; and if Blanch had not entirely lost her reason, the strength and stability of her intellect had been temporarily shaken by the violence of the fever. Imagination had an undue preponderance over reflection, and the power of resistance to wandering fancies was lessened.

And now the moral strength was gradually returning—and now a beautiful, though varying and evanescent, bloom brightened the fair cheek; and now—and now, for the time must come, Madeline must shake again the unbraced nerves, and cause the young form again to droop under the pressure of despair.

The Sister of the *vestiarium* had that wonderful power of sympathy which grows by exercise; and which is found so often among females of the middle class, who have followed the vocation of a nurse. One might suppose that their calling

would make them callous—not so, if the heart be originally good ; and Madeline, after casting about in her own thoughts how to begin, commenced her task of disclosure with a skill and delicacy which belong only to true feeling.

She began by commenting upon the evils of the times ; she touched upon the fate of her own brothers—lightly, indeed, for it was an oft-told tale — yet had been listened to with an interest by Blanch that revealed her secret uneasiness. Madeline went on to speak of the calamities which had befallen the soldiery, — she spoke of their patience under their sufferings,—their cheerful deaths, as she called them, for the one great cause,—the comforts of the last Sacraments—the certainty of their recompense hereafter ; but, suddenly, she cut short that theme, and turned to another subject. Then she spoke of the sorrows of the young wives left behind—of the orphans, who must struggle with a hard destiny—of the exertions of some, the resignation of others, “and all !” pursued Madeline, raising her eyes to the crucifix, “for Him who bore his own cross, and taught us to bear it also.”

“One night,” continued the Sister—“it

was that very night when thou couldst not sleep, my child"—for by this term of endearment were the holy Sisters enjoined to address the young and sorrowing—"I saw the departure of one so holy, that—but that he called not for the last Unction—I should have deemed him to have been one of the faithful. He was shot just above the knee, and when they brought him in, he was sinking fast. I asked him whether I should fetch one of our holy Fathers to him. He thanked me, but said, 'he could pray to God himself.' After this, he spoke no more; but I could see that his hands were oftentimes folded as in prayer—his eyes up-raised; when the surgeons came to him they found it was of no use to disturb him;—and so he sank to sleep."

"At what hour?—on what night, didst thou say?" cried Blanch, who had at first given to Madeline's narration only that variable attention which a mind preoccupied and weakened usually bestows.

"It was," returned Madeline solemnly, "that night when thou wast restless, towards the first morning-watch that his spirit departed. Blessed and purified may it be!"

"Thou speakest, Sister Madeline," said

Blanch, with a look confused, yet eager, "as if thou knew'st his name—as if—as if—Yes! I saw him ere he went hence! Thou couldst not deceive me. I knew that he had died!"

Madeline answered not. Blanch gazed at her for some moments. That silence, that kind glance and tearful eye of Madeline were enough. The young girl sank upon her knees, and, kneeling by the crucifix, buried her face in her hands.

* * * * *

CHAPTER XI.

“ Think not, my friend, when secret grief
Preys on my sadden'd heart,—
Think not I wish a mean relief,
Or would from sorrow part.
Dearly I prize these sighs sincere,
That my true passion prove ;
Nor could I bear to check the tear
That flows from hapless love.”

It was during the winter of 1645, about a year after the death of Sidney Godolphin, that the Marquis of Worcester once more welcomed to his castle the monarch, whose existence had been during the last twelve months nothing but a succession of adverse events. A wintry gloom hung over, not only the face of nature, but the interior of the castle. Strong guards were set on the ramparts, cannon were primed, the portcullises were scarcely ever upraised ; and the sole occupation of those who were not engaged in martial exercises, seemed to be in laying

in stores, not for the winter, for that was in a great measure passed, but for a siege, probably of long continuance.

The King rode hastily into the great court, attended by his body-guard—the greater part of the forces having marched to Bristol; and as he came into the courtyard he said to Lord Lindesay, “Our host shameth us!—Fy, my lord!—to stand bare-headed to receive us in this inclement season!”

But there was little time for compliments, and the King passed quickly through the hall into a private apartment, where strict orders were given that he should not be disturbed.

Lord Lindesay and Sir Edward Herbert, who had attended Charles, hastened to pay their respects to the ladies of the castle. An universal melancholy pervaded every countenance; and the welcomes that were given, and the inquiries which were exchanged, were short and constrained;—yet Lord Lindesay was calm—the struggle in his mind was over, and the battle of Naseby had closed, in his opinion, the contest.

Just as the conversation began to flow somewhat more easily—as Lady Arundel had shed the influence of her equal spirits

and kind heart upon the dejected, Lord Lindesay was summoned hastily to the King.

His majesty, usually so composed, was singularly agitated. He placed a paper into Lindesay's hand, and the words, "I have had despatches to-night;—we have lost Bristol!" broke from him.

Lord Lindesay turned pale. There had been surmises of Goring's infidelity; and was it possible that Rupert could prove faithless to his royal uncle?

"You are silent, Lindesay," said Charles, grasping the hand of his devoted servant: "Lindesay! if I cannot reign like a King, I will at least die like a *gentleman*!" The King turned away; and, after this well-known remark of his, he was observed, for the first time during his misfortune, to shed tears, in reference to any feelings of his own.

"Do not let our kind and aged host hear of this too suddenly, for, alas! he must ere long know!—Ragland will be the next point, and then—" the King looked around him—"and then!—the Tower—or the grave!"

Lord Lindesay in vain attempted to console his royal master.

"No matter, Lindesay! I shall bear up.

anon — had it been any other — but it is Rupert's doing. Did he keep it four days? was there anything like a mutiny?" The King paced up and down in much agitation as he added — "I have written severe reproaches to him — God forgive me if I have dealt hardly with my own flesh and blood! — and now, Lindesay, let us provide for the future."

"O! my liege," exclaimed Lindesay, "much overcome, "let us have but one care, but one concern."

"I understand thee," replied the King, pressing his hand. "On that point I have made up my mind. I have charged my son, if I be taken prisoner, on no account to consent to dishonourable terms to save my life,—it would make me end my days in *torture*." The King spoke with a marked emphasis. "Lindesay, thou knowest I fear not death. To-morrow I shall go hence; but whither it is not easy to determine."

"But now," resumed Charles, after a short pause, "summon my friendly host hither; let me counsel him, and lend me your aid, Lindesay, to persuade him to flee to France, and to leave his garrison to defend Ragland, under the care of Herbert. Chepstow is already in *their* power!"

sighed the King;—"and the fate of Basing is well nigh decided. There is too much peril for this good old man in remaining here. Tell him, that I desire to have some conference with mine host, and with the different members of his family."

Lord Lindesay withdrew. When he returned, conducting Lady Arundel, and followed by the Marquis of Worcester, by the Lady Cecily, and by Sir Edward Herbert,—Lord Arundel was with the forces,—he found the King calmly tracing some lines in a note-book—a journal which the royal sufferer kept of his thoughts and feelings.

"Welcome to ye all!" said Charles, raising his head. "My friend," he added, addressing the marquis, "I pr'ythee, be seated. But I see not all the children of thy honoured house here. Where is Mistress Blanch?"

"Alas!" replied the marquis, "your majesty honours my niece in thus naming her; but the once playful creature hath strangely changed her nature ever since her return to us. I know not wherefore, but my child is mopish, and seldom stirs from her turret chamber, since Edward hath brought her back to us."

"Indeed!" said the King, glancing at

Edward. "Nevertheless, let her be present with us. Sir Edward, do *you*"—he spoke with an emphasis on the word—"seek your kinswoman, and conduct her to us. What! hesitate? Art thou a soldier and a Herbert?"

"—And a Cavalier?" said Lord Lindsay, smiling.

"—The pride and flower of our young military!" pursued the King, as Edward, after a moment's delay, left the room. "He hath achieved more honour, my lord, in this last campaign than I like to think of—in that there should be such sad occasions of valour."

Meantime Edward went, in obedience to royal command, though pensively and leisurely. It was true that no coldness subsisted between him and Blanch. On the contrary, her afflictions, and the events of a perilous journey from Basing to Ragland, had drawn them into greater intimacy than they had ever before been permitted to share; and Blanch had too late learned to value the noble character of Herbert. She felt a sincere sympathy in his concerns—and he had had troubles and disappointments. She wished him every blessing, save that for which he ever, even in the tumult of war, in secret pined; and

she admired, with enthusiasm, the high and honourable sentiments, the spotless career of one who had never, since he entered into public life, allowed zeal to outstep humanity, nor permitted the seductions of a camp life to betray him into dissipation.

As Edward, preceded by a servant, entered the apartments of Lady Arundel, where Blanch was, a few notes of her lute and a few words which she sang arrested his steps.

"I am right glad to hear you sing again, Blanch," he said kindly; "this seemeth like returning health."

Blanch cast away her instrument, and looked up. It was a sweet and sad countenance upon which Edward now gazed; but the wandering eye, the restless manner had disappeared. Blanch had sought comfort in the bosom of her family, and had found it.

"I know that it is irksome to you to see strange faces," said Edward kindly; "and I would fain not disturb you; but his majesty commands your presence."

"I have been of late so unused to society," returned Blanch, shrinking as Edward offered her his hand. "May I not plead that I am indisposed?"

"There is some matter of high moment

to be discussed, Blanch ; and, trust me, there will not be many occasions on which thy solitude will be again disturbed by our Royal Master."

Blanch drew around her a mantle edged with fur,—a precaution that her failing health had rendered needful ; and, leaning on the arm of Edward, she walked languidly towards the royal apartments.

"You are *not* stronger," said Edward, as he supported her, trembling as she was. "I expected to have found you restored to health."

"I am *well*," replied Blanch ; she sighed deeply. "Dear Edward, I would that thou couldst forget me and my troubles ; I would that thou wouldst take my aunt Arundel's advice, and marry, as a man of thy condition ought to do."

"Let me pray thee to speak on that subject no more," said Edward hastily. "I perceive," he added more gently, and pressing the hand of Blanch as he spoke, "that thou art but little aware of the unsettled, and indeed, desperate, state of the King's affairs. His Majesty cannot maintain this contest long :—at Naseby, our doom was sealed. We shall dispute every rood of ground, inch by inch, with the Parliament ; but marry !—good heavens !

—marry, in such tumults and confusion, when, perchance, our days are numbered—and on many of us a price is already set!”

“You make me tremble, Edward,” said Blanch. “You speak with such violence, and so unlike yourself;—you, who, in my hour of darkness, and when my reason sank beneath the blow, sustained me;—you who came like a guardian spirit, and brought me where alone I could find balm: I had died else!”

“Do not, dear Blanch, distress yourself and me,” returned Edward, hastening her footsteps to check a theme on which too often Blanch had dwelt; for Edward had sustained Godolphin when he fell—Edward had borne him from the field—and to Edward she could speak more readily than to any other on the subject of her grief.

“But if I do recur to what is past, dear Edward!” said Blanch quickly, wishing to cheer one who had suffered much on her account, “it will be to tell you how much wiser, how much better, I am become,—how gay my spirits are, sometimes;”—the word was uttered with a sigh.—“So, be of good cheer, my kind cousin.” As she spoke, they found themselves in the presence of the King; and

Blanch, kneeling, kissed with enthusiastic reverence the hand extended to her.

"I want your aid, Mistress Blanch, to convert your uncle," said Charles, "not from his faith; for that I know him to be too great a controversialist to attempt—but from his loyalty. What say you? My lord," added the King seriously, "I lay my commands on you to flee without delay to the coasts,—Bristol is no longer ours—Chepstow is no longer *yours*:—the Parliament's troops have encamped near Piercefield woods, and—"

"—My house will be their next point of attack," said the marquis. "Be it so; I will not stir one step—the garrison is strong—"

"—But thou hast sacred pledges here," said the King, looking around at the marquis's family—

"I have another—my honour;—dearer than all," returned the marquis firmly.

"You are advanced in years, my lord," resumed the King, earnestly and sadly.

"The greater cause that I should not fear to lose my life, and please your majesty."

"And your sister—my Lady Arundel. O, my Lord, spare her a second War-dour."

“— We were preserved then,” said Lady Arundel, coming forward, “the same God rules in heaven, and on earth, now—as then !”

“ Well, then,” resumed Charles, “come hither, Colonel Herbert. My Lord Marquis, I bequeath thee one whom I would fain have kept near to myself; he is brave—honest—leal—I appoint him colonel of our garrison here. Herbert! I charge thee! defend the castle well! But do not let its lord and master be buried in its ruins. Surrender ere they bombard it—thy Sovereign commands thee, my brave young friend.” The King placed his hand upon the head of the kneeling officer, and turned away with much emotion.

“ Lady Cecily!” exclaimed the monarch, after a pause—“thou hast one child left. He is not *thine* alone; his father hath a common interest in him. Let me beseech thee to accept our escort as far as Barnstaple, and thence take ship for France. Consider of our proposal,” he added kindly, “and perchance thy fair cousin will bear thee company.”

“ Never!” exclaimed Blanch, “here I live, or die!”

“ Why, these are most disleal and re-

bellious subjects," said the King, smiling, "disaffection hath even spread to Ragland. Sir Edward, wilt *thou* not counsel thy gentle cousin to withdraw to France?"

"I would she were in safety," replied the young man, with deep reverence; "but I believe she may be safer with a kinsman's arm to defend her than with a host of strangers."

"Ah, Lindesay," whispered Charles, smiling, "this youth recalleth to me greatly the remembrance of poor Dormer, who, when his father would have persuaded him to renounce our cause, said simply these words—'Take from me my possessions, but leave to me my honour and allegiance.' But we must to horse by daybreak; and then, farewell to—" The King checked himself, and, advancing, pressed the hands of the Marquis of Worcester. "Mine host, I bid thee go to rest—farewell. I shall be far from hence ere thou hast sunk into thy first sleep. If we meet no more, remember me by this—" the King placed, as he spoke, a costly ring upon the finger of the marquis.—"Farewell to all!—Herbert! thou wilt not be false to thy trust, neither wilt thou offer a headstrong and fruitless resistance."

“Raglan shall be the last inch of ground in your majesty’s dominions that the Roundheads shall take,” returned Edward with animation.

“And the Yellow Tower of Gwent will not be battered to pieces in a day,” exclaimed the marquis, as he retired, and, at the King’s command, left his majesty alone with Lord Lindesay. By day-break, the King and his faithful Lindesay had departed, never more to visit Ragland Castle.

CHAPTER XII.

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
Hauberks crash and helmets ring.

GRAY.

It was the month of June, and bright hues and clear skies gladdened the hearts of men; and fearful sights, and sounds hitherto unknown in the peaceful valleys of the Wye, annulled the intentions of a beneficent Providence.

On the Landeny Downs, below in the Home park, around Cresseny, a host has gathered; the camp is pitched there; the trenches are opened; the works are planned; the batteries are planted; and Ragland, the pride of Wales, is the mark for the assailants. Yes, fair castle! proud towers! your hour is come! and Fairfax, who hath subdued all the castles that remained true to the King, hath brought destruction to your towers, sorrow to your hearth.

Within a tent, surrounded by a group

of officers, with the implements of writing before him, and a map on the table, sat the personification of care and toil, General Fairfax. In his thirty-third year only, he had the shattered and decrepid appearance of sixty. A gloomy, anxious countenance, not enlivened by that strong expression of intellect which obtained for Cromwell's plainness the epithet of "fine," nor redeemed by that symmetry of feature which softened the harshest lines of thought, spoke to the observer of hard work, and secret mental conflicts.

In exterior, Fairfax represented a link between the two extremes of party. To please the Puritans, his Presbyterian wife, and her friends, his hair was cropped close on the forehead, as a relic of old hereditary royalist fashions; it was left to curl in some length behind, and was, indeed, almost a necessary appendage, to conceal the emaciation of his face and throat, betraying the anxiety within, that wore the outward man almost to a shadow. His armour was brightly burnished, and the general still wore a star, emblem of carnal vanity, upon the sleeve with which the armour was, in those days, oftentimes debased. But then, around his throat no seductive lace, no Vandycke point, no sinful cambric,

bestudded with careful needlework, tempted the beholders to envy; nothing but a plain lawn collar, turned carefully down, and looking as if ashamed of itself, being very small and narrow, finished the costume of Sir Thomas Fairfax. His character partook of the same inconsistencies as his dress. A practised and courageous soldier, he was not vigorous as a general; severe upon principle, he was kind-hearted against his will, and in obedience to his nature. He was endowed with piety and integrity; yet he suffered the most sacrilegious devastations to take place, and forwarded, though without wishing them to prosper, the designs of Cromwell. When he discovered the true motives of his party, he sought to lay down his commission, but was persuaded to retain it on the plea of restraining the violence of others. Yet still Fairfax went on subduing Royalists, and attacking their strongholds, even after he was made Constable of the Tower, and might have been excused. Finally, he shed tears at Charles's death, and after, — with the utmost goodness of disposition, — having destroyed almost all that was fair, ancient, and holy in the kingdom, he rescued the libraries of Oxford from destruc-

tion, and aided General Monk in the Restoration.

The general had his eye upon a map of Monmouthshire; his finger pointed to a plan of the fortifications of Ragland; his mind was revolving on what point he should assail her batteries—(the wolf, scheming on which quarter he should enter the sheep-fold),—when a trumpeter, who had been sent to summon the Marquis of Worcester to surrender, brought in a letter.

Slowly did the general peruse its contents; he was not a man of eloquence, and an impediment in his speech rendered all consultation with his officers a matter of annoyance to Fairfax. He therefore merely glanced at a few leading points in the brave nobleman's reply.

“His lordship referreth to the King, whose garrison he affirms it to be,” said Fairfax; “‘I cannot think so meanly of his majesty,’ the marquis adds,” thus Fairfax read, “‘as to believe he would wish me to give up the garrison; and with respect to your summons to me, to give up my poor house, I see it is desired that I should die like a beggar, under a hedge, having no house left. Wherefore,’” continued General Fairfax, his long pale face

assuming a yet more dolorous aspect as he read, “‘ to give you answer, I make choice, if it shall so please God, rather to die nobly, than to live with infamy; which, if it be not pleasing to you, I shall think you not worthy to be styled by me

‘ Your loving friend and servant,

‘ H. WORCESTER.’ ”

Sir Thomas Fairfax folded up the letter, endorsed it, and gave it to his secretary, to place in his cabinet. Then he arose; “ I am answered,” he said, looking around at the officers who composed his council. “ *We* are prepared, as well as my Lord of Worcester;” and he walked forth, with his spy-glass in his hand, to view the works.

Meantime, the marquis sauntering through the pleasaunce at Ragland, was followed by Blanch, the young in years, the aged in sorrow; she was strangely altered, not only in form and face, but in nerve and character, since the siege of Wardour; for now she clung to the arm of her uncle listlessly, hopelessly, and ever and anon the petition was reiterated that he would surrender to General Fairfax.

“ No, no, child,” returned the marquis

seating himself within a curiously-constructed bower, and taking the hand of Blanch within his, "General Fairfax should have the same answer from me were he here at this moment to receive it. I hope I serve, — though not so well as I *should*, — a Master that is of more might than all the armies in the world, — and to *His* will I submit myself." As he spoke he arose, and, standing upon the green lawns of the pleasure, raised one arm, and pointed to Heaven, — "There ! there, child, we must look for strength."

"I know," returned Blanch, meekly, and presently she stood beside him. The frowning towers of Ragland before them ; close by, roses and flowers, and all the gay garniture of summer, and the scents and the sounds that the flower-garden offers ; far beyond, was the park, its deer sporting beneath the branches of the old oak ; in the distance rose the white summits of the dreaded camp, set in lines — the Leaguer as it was called, — whence Fairfax issued his threats.

"I know," resumed Blanch, after a deep silence, "that all is ordained, but," — she paused, for a sudden gloom had overspread the laughing landscape ; the thunder-cloud had gathered over the massive

towers; the stream wherein the trout sported looked turbid, and reflected the darkened skies, the wind blew the light shrubs; and one of those unlooked-for summer-storms, which sometimes gather over the face of heaven when the sun is the brightest, and Nature in her holiday suit of joy, came to scare the wanderers abroad, into their homes.

"O my lord!" cried Blanch, looking up at the portending skies, "'Tis ominous. Mind you not, how fatal have been our auguries throughout the war? Recall you not, that when our sovereign's standard was first raised at Nottingham, it was by a tempestuous and unruly wind blown down?—and now,—"

"And now, I know," replied the marquis firmly, "that storms, nay, thunder-clouds are meant for good, as well as ill,—let us take it that way."

"Then wherefore shelter me with your arm, and cast your cloak about me? good, my lord," asked Blanch, as the marquis, throwing his mantle over her shoulders, and pressing her to him, hurried to the castle, for the forked lightning had once, twice given an unearthly, yet beautiful hue to the distinct and lovely landscape;—had gilded, for a bright instant, the marble

statues, the sparkling fount, the delicate shrubs, the tender shrinking flowers, and all, with that peculiar glow which no tongue can describe, nor pencil imitate.

"Because, because," replied the marquis tenderly, but quickly, "I would guard thy young head from *every* peril, if I could."

They gained the Fountain court; they reached the door which led into the chapel. But, ere the marquis and Blanch had found refuge in that holy pile, their senses were amazed, their speech silenced. The alarm bell rings! It rings, it echoes through the courts; its deep voice is heard close to the ear even while the thunder rolls; it rings,—it is heard far and near, heard by the shepherd on the downs, heard by the priest within the church of Ragland; it is heard over heights that, as yet, knew not its awful summons to defence; it is heard amid rocks hitherto silent and untracked,—the poor gather themselves into their houses, for scarcely could the old remember its meaning sounds. Many seek their village sanctuary—the church. Ah simple ones! it is a sanctuary not alone in war, but also in peace! The poor man's *own*.

On the ramparts a gallant band stand

arranged, fearless of the elements, prepared for the destructive force of man. And there stands an officer, of bold and noble bearing; he, though young, to whom was entrusted the safety, nay more, the honour of that garrison. All is ready, all is prepared, all are sanguine,—save one inmate of that castle.

She, the once valiant one, has fallen at her uncle's feet. They had gained the long gallery, and the marquis and his loved Blanch were alone.

"No, no, Blanch, it cannot be, and so wherefore these vain fears? My child, arise;—we can but die!"

"I am glad,—I thank heaven!" said Blanch, arising from her knees, "that Cecily is safe, that she and her Claude are by this time on the seas."

"Why, plaything, thou wert not wont to be afraid!" cried the marquis. "Come hither, Edward," he added, turning at this moment, "give us heart,"—he stopped short, for a low rumbling sound like thunder was heard at this moment. The marquis listened calmly. "It is the thunder, perhaps," he said, looking at Blanch.

"No no," screamed the scared girl. "I know it well! I know it well! it is not

thunder!" Her face looked wild, her lips quivered as she spoke.

"Comfort her, Edward," said the marquis, weeping, for his spirits, which feared not Fairfax and his host, were broken by a woman's tears. "I have no heart to speak to her, when she is in these moods. Comfort my poor stricken, broken-hearted child."

"They are not here! The Leaguer is at some distance,—they will not harm thee. There is no danger, dearest," said Edward, supporting the terrified Blanch, who gladly rested her throbbing head upon that protecting arm, and looked up for consolation and support to her kinsman.

"Is there not? will they not approach near? will not the danger come so home to us as at Wardour, or shall I not see such sights as at Basing?" asked Blanch, shuddering—"I have not forgotten them—I dare not see such any more."

"Nor wilt thou, my own, my ever dearest Blanch—General Fairfax is merciful;—he will not drive us to extremes."

"Merciful!—call you him merciful? Is that man merciful who can destroy town after town, castle after castle,—abbeys—convents—who now cometh to

hasten my lord, my loved uncle, to his grave? Is *that* mercy?"—Edward turned away.

"All is ready;—our garrison are honest men—loyal—true to their faith—resolved—the rest we must trust to God!"—his voice trembled. "I must to my duty—farewell!"—He turned, and looked for an instant at the changed being whom he had known in her hours of joy, a gleam of sunshine once on life's weary journey—now! He could not repeat the parallel, often, in calm, yet in sad hours, drawn by remembrance.

Blanch repeated his last word—"Farewell!" She looked at him for an instant—then she was by his side—"Farewell! I blush, Edward, that my weak heart and feebleness of purpose may have shaken thy resolution. But no! it cannot! thou hast no fears, save to do wrong—*thou* hast not the recollections that I cannot banish;—but, I have harassed thee with that theme too often—thou hast borne with the miserable—thou hast consoled the wretched one!"

"—And thou wilt not despond?" said Edward, as he turned again and again to look at her.

"No!" exclaimed Blanch, yet shrinking

as from some invisible foe—"Thou must not be angry with me, Edward—thou wilt not chide me—my mind, thou knowest, is weakened—I am a poor, unhappy, feeble being now!" She wept, then added, hastening to Herbert, "but for *his* sake who loves us both—for my Aunt Arundel's, for her sake I will,—yes, Edward, indeed I will try to be calm, and not to be afraid."

This was the last conversation which Blanch and her kinsman had together, until *all* was decided. The siege went on, and mortars, of stupendous power were planted, carrying granado shells,—the destructive force of which one may, in fancy, still trace here and there as one explores the scenes of that disastrous period:—the army of Fairfax was increased by reinforcement, and, at length, the approaches advanced so near that a mortar was even planted within sixty yards distant from the fort. This was, however, a work of several weeks; for the besiegers were perpetually assaulted by the brave garrison within; and desperate sallies, proposed by the courage of Herbert, and contrived by the skill of several of his officers experienced in defence—an art brought to an unparalleled per-

fection in those times,—embarrassed the movement of the Leaguer. All England looked attentively on this famous siege. All ranks felt a sympathy with the lord of Ragland; his gentle virtues, his true piety, his disinterestedness, his years, were not forgotten by the good and the humane of every party;—whilst, by the Royalists, a degree of intensity of feeling was exhibited, which often brought a flush of pleasure, in his after days, to the old man's cheeks, and tears to his eyes.

Each day,—what annals!—was marked by some fresh inroad upon security: some gateway battered down; some wall or rampart stormed; some lofty tower tottering to its ruin; some mighty mass blown into atoms! And each day the Marquis of Worcester rose more proudly above circumstances.

“The donjon is yet entire,” he said to Colonel Herbert, who came in to report proceedings, and to commune for an instant with those for whom he would gladly have died; “when that goes, I have my dwelling-house; we have a mill, too, that will make a barrel of powder a day. We have a store of wine and malt-wine, and beer for the men, poor churls! let them lack nothing; and do thou cheer up, Herbert; fear not!”

“Fear!” replied the young man, mournfully—He hastened away. The aspect of the old marquis, his very calmness, the sight of those dependent upon *his* own protection, on his strength of purpose, his valour, his prudence, his intellect—always shook the resolution of Herbert. He could view the noble works of art, the magnificent furniture, the library, filled with rarities which no wealth could recall into existence, without emotion—but one accent of Blanch’s voice, the sound of Lady Arundel’s step, the calm heroism of Lord Worcester, unmanned the youth, and made him acknowledge that, whilst his heart was in the castle, his most fitting place, in order to preserve his equanimity, should be in the garrison.

As the siege went on, as dangers thickened, Blanch was gradually restored to her former heroism and fortitude. She forgot Wardour; she forgot Basing; she forgot all that she had suffered in her devotion to those whose courage she might support; in her zeal and love for Ragland, she rose above the power of memory; and thus, day after day, week after week elapsed; the bright days of June passed away; July and August, came, not joyfully as of yore; not with

the yellow waving wheat near the farmsted; or the neat-herd's voice, calling his young kine; or the juicy fruits collected from the orchards lying in heaps ready to be carried into the store-house; or the church-bell summoning the poor to prayers! All was dire confusion, black desolation, pillage, waste, despair!

The middle of August had arrived;—no reinforcements had reached, none could reach, Ragland; the provisions were greatly diminished; they were in fact getting low; and, after a struggle of desperate valour and of firm determination—after Colonel Herbert had done all that mortal man could effect, the marquis suddenly resolved to surrender the Castle.

“Our powder is supplied by our mill, it is true; our wine and malt are not yet exhausted; but our corn, our meat, fail us! The King, I hope, will acquit me of all remissness in my duty; his majesty will learn that we have not disgraced his name, nor our own; but I cannot see my people die for hunger. And already,” added the marquis, addressing his sister, Lady Arundel, to whom alone he spoke in the confidence of brotherhood, “our poor dependents languish for food.” He turned away; his strong frame shook

with emotion. "It must be done, sister. I cannot see those who look up to me for bread perish! Where is Blanch?"

"She hath been faint," replied Lady Arundel, struggling to master her feelings. "A man was carried across the Fountain court, wounded. — Poor child! she was wont to bear the sight of blood better than this."

"Bid her come hither! — It frets me most," said the marquis to himself, as he paced up and down that noble library, in which the famous and most rare collection of Welsh manuscripts, first collected by the Earl of Pembroke, were, till the fate of Ragland, preserved, — "it chafes me most to see Edward Herbert grown, since the siege, care-worn and wan. The boy spareth others, and I fear this charge is too heavy on his head. Some conditions must be made; and what matters it where *we* abide, who look to a future state?"

The marquis looked out, as he spoke, upon the melancholy scene beneath his windows; masses of stone, countless bullets, half-expiring shells; the dying, the dead, lay in the approaches to the castle; on that noble platform, where Charles had walked, confusion reigned. The Tower of Gwent was now a heap of stones — its

vaults pillaged—the foundation alone of that famous citadel where the marquis had his treasure was to be traced—its majestic height was lowered, never more to be raised.

“My child,” said the marquis, turning to his niece as she approached him, “my Blanch, listen to me—I have written to General Fairfax and sent the despatch;—and I know that he is of that gentleness, worth, and true judgment, that he will offer nothing ignoble. I have desired to know his conditions, for we must needs surrender.”

“And his reply?” asked Blanch, whilst her face was flushed with a remnant of her former spirit,—“is it courteous?—is it such as my uncle ought to entertain?”

“I have not yet received it; but I have prayed—yes, my child, I *have* prayed for a cessation of arms, until I receive the terms upon which, alone, our surrender can be made. I feel some anxiety,” added the marquis, with more agitation of manner than usual, “to have my answer.”

“The firing continues,” said Lady Arundel; “and Edward, poor youth! hath passed many nights without sleep. God be praised!” she continued, “that Arundel and Cecily—their children too—are

safe. I could ill have borne to have seen little Claude grow wan and timorous—and Everard, he sleepeth in peace!”

“Let us praise God, not question His decrees,” returned the marquis, solemnly. “He will make His ways known unto us.” And, taking Blanch with him, he followed his sister into an inner room, where they could, for an instant, forget the ruin around their home.

—It was now the sixteenth day of August, and Ragland had stood the assaults of its assailants since the twentieth of June. The cessation of hostilities which the marquis had asked was gladly acceded to by Fairfax, whose ammunition began to fail; but this interval of rest gave a death-like effect to the Castle and to its doomed inhabitants, and was a fatal measure, so far as its further defence was concerned. The spirits of the besieged, sustained by perpetual action, broke down under the inertia that succeeded to excitement.

In silent musing Colonel Herbert roamed through the Castle and its precincts, and surveyed the havoc which many weeks had wrought. A silence, more awful than that of the burial-ground, reigned throughout the fortress. The watch were, in-

deed, still vigilant, but they were, many of them, crippled. Their joyless, hopeless air, their faint voices, corresponded but too well with the desolation around. There was no hope, even at that stage of the ruin, which has left Ragland so mournful a memento of civil strife, of ever seeing those noble towers, monuments of art, restored. Princely wealth could scarcely have rebuilt the work of ages. All Colonel Herbert hoped, all he sought, by his survey, was to calculate what chance there still remained of withstanding the host of Fairfax—how far he, as commander of the garrison, should be justified in not complying with any terms that might be offered. “And yet,” he asked himself, mournfully, “wherefore should we hold out? For a week, perhaps—and, day by day, some high-spirited soldier, some loyal heart, sinks in the conflict!” And then his mind reverted to the inmates of Ragland. He shuddered; but, in an instant, reflection consoled him with the recollection—“It is Fairfax, not Cromwell, with whom we have to deal: he hath some conscience.” As he reasoned thus, the horrible scenes at Basing;—the men crying in vaults for quarter, the sacking of that noble

edifice, which had just then, at length, after a resistance of two years, yielded to the despoiler, and been burned to the ground by its irritated assailants,—re-curred to his recollection, and he hailed with gladness a message from the marquis. He hastened to the still magnificent apartments occupied by the family.

“The conditions which are offered to us by the enemy are such as I cannot sign; besides, I dread the promises of the Parliament,” said the marquis, advancing to meet him, and placing a scroll, just received from Fairfax, in his hand. “Herbert, I consign the fortress to your valour—our lives to Him who tends the ravens.” Whilst he yet spoke, a musket-ball, passing close to the marquis’s head, grazed the skin. “Ah!” he exclaimed, whilst Blanch clasped him in her arms and stanchd the blood with her kerchief, fearless of the danger which had terrified her before—“they are in a hurry to begin—the rebels are marvelously sparing of their time. “Was this well in the general, as they call him? Is it courtly?—is it liberal?—is it neighbourly?”

Whilst he spoke a heavy cannonade was heard—shrieks, and groans of anguish, filled up the interval between the firing.

Some days of intense anxiety to the inhabitants of Ragland succeeded that renewal of hostilities. It was of no avail—resistance could not continue. The marquis, strong in nerves as he still was, had not sufficient hardihood, as other great men have had, to see the whole of his brave defenders fall one by one; or to mark the slower progress of famine in thinning his garrison; and, after a week of incessant bombardment—a week of horror and apprehension—a week fraught with mental and bodily suffering, Lord Worcester, unable to sustain the mournful sight, again sent a trumpeter to Fairfax.

“I am glad,” said the great general, a smile lighting up his face—which had become thinner than ever; “I am glad the gallant, but foolhardy, old man is brought to reason. Yet there is still a reserve of courage even in this letter!” added Fairfax. ‘From my poor cottage of Raglan.’ His lordship claims, I see, my courtesy on the score of a former friendship with the Lord Fairfax. Ah! he ought to know how little the affections of nature have to do with the judgments of the politician.”

Thus spoke he to his secretary. Then Fairfax summoned his council, and the conditions—the last act of the tragedy—

were coolly discussed, calmly prepared! The officers, grave, collected, insensible to a single touch of feeling; the general, somewhat, perhaps, moved by the heroism and the misfortunes of the marquis, yet viewing the destruction of Ragland as a matter of course—a duty to the state; one hand holding the marquis's letter, which, as Fairfax observed, was "writ," (and his face was varied by a ghastly smile,) "in a less clear text and with fewer flourishes than those heretofore sent;" the other hand placed on a list of the garrison who were to march out, and to leave their bravely-defended quarters to the victorious soldiers of Fairfax,—formed a strange and mournful scene—tragic in its meaning, comic in its details.

"Brethren!" said Sir Thomas Fairfax, opening the scroll in which the garrison of Ragland was numbered; "there be still, though the losses have been great, four colonels, eighty-two captains (out of a hundred and fifty as I heard, but there is no depending upon rumour), sixteen lieutenants, six cornets, four quartermasters,—no use troubling you, my Christian friends, with all these—to be brief, fifty-two esquires and gentlemen. The conditions I propose," added Fairfax, lay-

ing down the scroll, and addressing his council, and which have been agreed to at Master Oates' house, near Raglan, by my Lord Worcester's commissioners and our own—are, that these officers and men shall march out in fair order, colours flying, drums beating, trumpets sounding; the guns loaded, and each soldier with twelve charges of powder, match and bullet proportioned, to be marched to any place within ten miles of the fortress, and then to deliver up the same. These and the other articles of capitulation which I have read to ye being duly signed, I must despatch," said Fairfax, rising abruptly, "and ride forth to Raglan; for, on the morrow, I purpose (since the Lord hath been pleased," added the general, raising his eyes and hands, "to show us on what mortal seed all earthly glory grows,) to hasten to the Bath. Raglan being disposed of—"

"—And sinners having been taken in their own snares," said one of the officers, "and the heads of the righteous being lifted up—"

"—True," returned Fairfax dryly; "yet I opine not with General Cromwell, who affirmeth that, in the destruction of Basing, 'our Creator hath answered the

prayers of the people.' We cannot so, my friends," added the general, "interpret His inscrutable ways. Let us, however, to horse; and see that no unbridled fury visit what these misguided ones deem holy;" and, thus breaking up, Fairfax repaired to his own tent. It is said, that, on that day, when he was to receive the keys of Ragland, the general attired himself with a costliness totally unaccustomed;—for, still an early affection for that great aristocracy to which his family belonged, or, perhaps—a higher sentiment—a reverence for tried virtue, prevailed over the harsher dictates of party feeling.

The marquis, on his part, was prepared for this the last guest his hospitable halls should ever receive; and the spirit of courtesy guided the lord of Ragland even on this occasion. Events could not change nature and habit. He was as great in giving up the keys of Ragland, as he had ever been in governing that vast domain over which he ruled; he was as gracious, and as dignified, in his calm courtesy to Fairfax, as if the general had come to share his splendid entertainment, not to drive from his home, the master of the castle. The sister and niece of the marquis were of like mind.

"Gwyllim," said Lady Arundel, to the disconsolate minstrel, whom she found mournfully leaning over the music-gallery, and looking upon the hall beneath in the silence of deep despair, "strike not the chords of thy harp with the notes of the lament, as I heard thee just now. Sound a martial tune, Gwyllim,—sing an ode of triumph! for Ragland has lost her power—but not her honour!"

She spoke in Welsh; the old man answered her in the same tongue.

"Ah, madam! I shall never string that harp again!—I shall lay me down and die!"

"Thou talkest idly, Gwyllim," said the lady; "think how thy chords have gladdened our hearts—reflect how thy strains inspired our men!" She looked at the old minstrel as she spoke. "His head is heavy," she said, as she hastened away. "He hath not slept for many a night." She left him leaning, as if petrified, beside his harp; she hastened to the gallery. Lord Worcester and Blanch were there, Lady Arundel drew near to them with a steady step and a composed air. She rested her arm on that of her brother, Blanch clung to him on the other side, and thus they waited the approach of Fairfax, whose arrival was

announced by a salute from that portion of the ramparts which his forces had gained. Ragland was, upon certain conditions, honourably and fully surrendered.

The General took a calm survey of the castle as he passed through its courts, and loitered in its chambers. He was not devoid of feeling—on the contrary; but war had deadened present sympathies; and General Fairfax had been irritated by a defence which had cost him some of his bravest officers; and had lowered his reputation in the eyes of scientific judges of sieges. He admired—who could not but admire?—the Fountain court; he even praised the chapel; his encomiums were quietly uttered, for the despoiler had too much good taste to insult the fallen hero of Ragland. After gratifying his curiosity, Fairfax made his way to the grand gallery, (the hall was now too much shattered to receive him,) and stood in the presence of the Marquis of Worcester. It was a singular, almost an unprecedented meeting.

“I have been fain, Sir Thomas Fairfax,” said the nobleman, with as much dignity and courtesy as when he received the king, and dressed in his full costume, wearing a miniature of Charles the First around his neck;—“I have been fain

to give you even yet more trouble, than you have had in subduing his majesty's garrison:—but your late bombarding of the castle has brought me to your terms."

"I am glad to see your lordship well, and so stout in heart," replied General Fairfax, dryly, looking, as he spoke, at the long series of stately portraits which graced the walls of the gallery.

"Your arms, Sir Thomas, have made some *impression* on my walls," observed the marquis, coolly, for the distant bearing of Fairfax pleased him not. "And I am willing to believe, that, for the sake of an ancient bond of union between me and your noble grandsire, the Lord Fairfax of Dando, you may be pleased to spare my poor house any further damage. For myself," added the peer loftily, "it is of little consequence. Vastly little will content me—but, I have sons, and sons' sons,—like Noah,—and they will want an ark."

"Doubtless," replied General Fairfax, kindly, for the better parts of his nature prevailed; and he was touched by the situation of the princely old man. "I engage," he added solemnly, "to see that the articles be performed."

"Your word, sir, I may trust; but may I," asked the marquis, "be assured that

the like fate that hath befallen my Lord Shrewsbury, shall not befall my poor cottage? My mind greatly misgives me. You know my Lord Shrewsbury obtained very fair conditions; but how were they *observed*?" Lord Worcester looked steadfastly at Fairfax as he spoke.

"Set your heart at rest on that point, my lord," returned Fairfax, with some emotion. "But," he added, the moment afterwards, in a cold, dry tone, "my lord, there are some other conditions to be complied with, besides those of the Parliament: some on your side. You, and your family, are ye willing, and ready to depart? I am grieved to hasten your removal; but, I must return to the Bath, which siege must also be accomplished."

"O! sir," replied the marquis, "since we must go; 'tis fitting that we go soon. Will it affront you, or those who have directed you to this work, if we ask our destination?"

"My lord," said General Fairfax, stammering, "ye must, for the present, be lodged in the Tower of London."

"Ah, sir! you are witty, and wise, too. It is but for the present!" the marquis paused for an instant, "a very small lodging will serve me soon."

He arose, and looked around at his sister; "Sir Thomas, sister Arundel," said the marquis, bowing to the general, "shall have the honour of conducting thee. Blanch! what frights thee, girl?" he added, "as the young creature flew to him, and grasped his arm. "Well! Let us proceed; be of stout heart, my lass."

The prisoners then walked towards the grand staircase. This, of which there are now no traces left, was one of twenty-three staircases, which were afterwards broken up, and pillaged by the peasantry of Monmouthshire; but not until the *good* marquis was forgotten: whilst he lived, not a fragment was touched by the rural poor. They walked, in silent procession down this staircase, and descended to the hall,—the windows were beaten in—the groined arches were defaced; the last cannonading of Fairfax had done this; but it was nothing! nothing to a sight of horror—Edward, the brave defender of the castle, standing, surrounded by armed men—a prisoner!

The heart of Lord Worcester bled at this sight!—

"Edward, my boy!" he cried, "God bless thee! After all, shattered, and in jeopardy as thou art, thou art in far

better trim as to thy heavenly journey, than a rebel."

A murmur broke from some officer of the Parliament. "Silence!" exclaimed General Fairfax. "Respect his lordship's years—and his afflictions."

"Edward," exclaimed Lady Arundel, "my blessing on thy brave head;" she moved on, but Blanch flew into his arms. "Forgive and forget," she murmured, whilst many around could not restrain their natural sympathy as they looked on—"forgive and forget all!" She tore herself from him, and joined her uncle and Lady Arundel.

"Sir Edward Herbert," said Fairfax courteously, "there is one ceremonial, with which, ere thou goest hence, I grieve to say thou must comply."

"I do remember it!" exclaimed Edward, with a dignity that well became the occasion. He drew his sword from his side. "They would have taken it from me. I surrender it, sir, to you."

The general stood for a few instants without receiving it. His eyes were fixed on the fine countenance of Herbert. He started from a momentary reverie, and took the sword. "You are young, sir, for a commander," said Fairfax, kindly.

"Your defence hath been a master-piece for one unpractised in such affairs."

"I would it had more availed," replied Colonel Herbert, bowing with courtesy, yet speaking so loud that the whole assembly might hear him.

"You have saved your garrison, Sir Edward," returned the parliamentary commander, still more kindly;—"and have obtained fair conditions."

"I thank God!—They are brave men!" said Herbert in a faltering tone; he looked around him for an instant; the garrison were partly assembled in the hall. As Herbert spoke, they cheered him loudly; and, for the last time, a shout arose to the roof of that old hall, in which were heard the words—"Long live King Charles!"

"Hath the garrison marched out, yet?" asked Fairfax, waiting calmly and without checking the cheering.

"The drums are now beating on the ramparts," was the reply; "their colours are mounted, the trumpets have been sounded, and the officers and soldiers will deliver up their arms within ten miles of the garrison."

"Good!—Sir Edward Herbert!" said General Fairfax, turning back and looking upon the brave young man, the last

of the kindred of Lord Worcester, now beneath its walls; "I give you permission to withdraw to the coast. Hasten across to Jersey, until the pleasure of Parliament be known. I trust its sentence will be to perpetual exile. I would not that one so brave and young should undergo any severer sentence."

"I thank you for your merciful intentions, Sir Thomas," replied Herbert. "But I prefer to stand upon my trial."

"You are rash, young man," said General Fairfax. "Consider the point well. There is a pass, if you wish it, to Falmouth—thence it will be easy to cross to France; or, if you remain"—the general paused—he fixed his eyes on the young man's countenance; he seemed to Fairfax stupified by the circumstances of his situation,—“if you remain—”

"—I thank you, sir," again, interrupted Edward, starting from a momentary oblivion of the scene around him, for his thoughts were with those whom he loved. "I thank you heartily; nor do I affect to despise your offer, nor to be indifferent to life; for I still hope to serve my Royal Master some day!" he added, a smile lighting up his countenance for a moment.

"No abuses!—no clamour!" exclaimed General Fairfax, checking the exclamations of the parliamentary soldiers who were now gathering near the prisoner; and were indignant at his hardihood.

"Build no hopes of that sort, Sir Edward. What are your reasons? Let me once more counsel you to accept my proposal. I feel, believe me, deeply," added Fairfax, "for so brave—so manly—so unfortunate an enemy."

"Pardon me, Sir Thomas! I thank you kindly—very kindly—but, it hath been my *good* fortune to defend this castle," said Edward. "I am no object of pity."

"Yet will not the Parliament deem it so, young man?" Fairfax began, looking sorrowfully at him. "You are then resolved?"

"I am," answered Herbert, "and prepared to go whither you will! My friends—my brother officers," he cried, as, surrounded by the guard, he walked through the hall towards the gateway, "one cheer for King Charles!—in the open court, and under the canopy of heaven, Long life to him!"

Meantime, the marquis, with a guard of parliament soldiers near him, walked with a stately step through the two great

courts of his once proud castle. He was silent, for *he* could never hope to tread those courts again; and it was with a solemn sense of the yet greater approaching change, with a stern conviction of the mutability of all things *here*, that the venerable nobleman passed through the ruined archways and gained the portal. *This* was still entire—and here the marquis was joined by Fairfax, who had hastened to overtake his magnanimous prisoner.

“I have not dared”—said the marquis, “to look to the right, nor yet to the left, lest I might see those whose aspect may unman me. Have the grace, Sir Thomas, to say farewell, in my name, to the officers of my garrison, to my poor servants,—nay, to the common soldiers and serving-men,” cried the kind old man. He stood still for a moment, and was forced to lean on the shoulder of the general to sustain himself.

“And be there any,” asked Fairfax, “whom you would, my lord, more specially name? Time presseth;—yet tell me, if any last boon your lordship willeth.”

“Ah! sir!”—the marquis looked at him with an arch smile,—“I must trust to the *mercies* of Parliament.” He

shook his head, as if to say, no such requests would be attended to. "Yet," he added a moment afterwards, "there be two petitioners, Sir Thomas, come of their own free-will to pray for grace." He pointed to a couple of tame pigeons, which flew from a broken turret, and lighted on his shoulder. "I would fain pray for these fond simpletons, who have daily eaten from my hands, that they may be spared. For the rest," he said, in a low tone, turning for a moment to the ruined citadel, "look there ! and see if I can ask *mercy*, and think to have it granted."

Fairfax was silent ; and it was observed that he did not seem either to care to look back at the castle ; and the marquis, without uttering another word, ascended into his state coach.

Lady Arundel and Blanch slowly followed. As they turned to take one look of Ragland, a sight appalled them. It was Gwyllim,—standing on a battered tower ; his harp on his arm—his eye was glazed and fixed—his lips moved not—he looked like the spectre of departed joys—he uttered no plaint. The harp was never more heard among those broken turrets, nor in the courts within.

♦

CHAPTER XIII.

He's gone! the master of the field,
The central gem of Honour's shield,
The pride of Virtue's car;
The Tyrant's scourge, the foe's annoy,
The brave man's friend, the soldier's joy,
The father of the war.

Old Song.

THE Marquis of Worcester died before his Royal Master; and closed his long life in the Tower of London; not many weeks after he had been first committed to the custody of the Black Rod;—and then, sent to that stern prison, the grave of so many noble spirits.

It is not to be imputed to Fairfax, but to that party with whom he was associated, and whose violence shackled his gentle intentions, that every condition with regard to the preservation of Ragland was violated.

But it was, perhaps, owing to the intercession of Fairfax, that the Marquis of

Worcester was permitted to have his own family around him, and to receive the last offices of religion from his chaplain, Dr. Baily. His latter days were often saddened by mournful tidings of his loved home; but they were cheered by hopes of an eternal home, and the affectionate heart of this—the boast of our English nobility—often evinced its gentle qualities in trifling matters.

“I marvel whether the general hath kept his word,” he said one day, “and hath protected my poor home, and hath dealt fairly with my garrison. But no!” he added thoughtfully; “it is easy to talk of mercy; but they have showed but little. If to seize upon all my goods, to pull down my house, to sell my estates” (which were confiscated), “and to send such a weak body as mine, enfeebled by disease, to the Tower;—if that be merciful, what are they whose mercies are so cruel?” Yet such remarks were rare; and in cheerfulness, resignation, and peace with all men, were the later hours of his eventful life concluded.

“They have permitted me to be buried in Windsor,” he said, one day, to his weeping relatives; “so I shall have a better

castle when I am dead than they took from me whilst living."

At last he sank to rest! Beneath the stones of Saint George's Chapel lie the mouldering remains of the good and loyal Marquis of Worcester. His memory lives in the hearts of those, who, prizing true greatness, would fondly wish to see the nobles of this land resemble him in faith, true patriotism, honest and homely worth. "A gentleman, in a text letter;" to quote Fuller; "his life is interesting to those who would fain hope that purer motives, higher pursuits, a more blameless career may yet, be aspired to by an aristocracy, which has no parallel in other nations for its descent—I mean not in quarterings, nor in antiquity of derivation—I mean the descent of honours nobly gained, and virtuously supported."

When Lady Arundel, her niece, and Lord Lindesay,—the chief mourners,—who followed the marquis to his entombment, were retiring from the ceremonial, they were informed, by a gentleman who waited upon them from General Fairfax, that they were free to leave the country. Lord Lindesay declined the offer; he was then a prisoner in the Tower, and there he remained until the death of

Charles the First, whose body he attended to the grave. That duty performed Lord Lindesay left England—nor returned to it again. For the restoration, gladly as he hailed it, could not restore to *him* his sovereign, master—his friend. It is a common saying that a king cannot have a friend—the life of Charles the First presents a contradiction of this assertion.

Four years had elapsed after the destruction of Ragland Castle, when Edward Herbert again stood upon the brow of Edge-Hill,—again looked upon the wooded flat of fair Warwickshire, with its unscathed castle-towers in the dim horizon, its imperturbable Avon in its quiet vales, its antique village churches rising now here, now there, amid huge oaks of countless age, or patrician elms; and again the brave Cavalier gazed, for many moments, with a soldier's interest, with the pride of a Royalist, upon the vale of the Red Horse, along the sides of which the plough-share, emblem of peace, was turning up the rich brown soil of one of England's fairest and most fertile of counties.

But the Cavalier rested not long upon that spot, so replete with mournful associations. He rode down to the lonesome

village of Tysoe; his horse's hoofs sinking into the sand of that "world's-end" village;—he passed the church, and coming upon the green-sward, the chimneys of Compton Winyates—the smoke curling up amid the beeches and elms by which it was sheltered—rose to view. And now the young man's impatience was uncontrollable; he dashed by the ancient and singular church of Compton, (on the roof of which the firmament is depicted in a sort of rude fresco,)—he rode round towards the pleasaunce, and there he hastily alighted, and gave his horse to an attendant.

"We are expected," he said, "yet do not sound the horn at the gate, it may disturb the Lady Arundel."

The groom rode away towards the stables, and Edward, leaping over a low wall, entered the pleasaunce. It was all tangled with luxuriant shrubs; for the lord of Compton Winyates, James, the third Earl of Northampton, was in exile; and, during the misfortunes of this loyal family, Compton Winyates fell into a state of decay, which no subsequent care ever ultimately repaired. And here had Lady Arundel, from her age, her virtues, and her incapability of doing any harm

to the prevailing cause, been permitted, with Blanch, to retire in safety.

Edward, with a throbbing heart, passed on; four years of absence had not shaken his early affections,—they were still centred in those whom he had loved in childhood—yet, perhaps, other considerations, sadder—even more absorbing—caused him, as he stood beneath a tree, and looked up to the house, and listened for the sounds of well-known voices; deeper emotions—yes! stronger even than the love of a constant heart, caused him to pass his hand across his brow, and to hesitate, even to tremble, ere he crossed the threshold of the old house.

For, recently—before Edward had been permitted to return from the exile to which he had been sentenced by Parliament,—Charles had suffered, the hero of the solemn and long-drawn tragedy;—the trial—the preparation—the death:—and this event had cast over England a shadow, the influence of which even the vehement partisans of the Commonwealth could not resist. Fanaticism may blind—may mislead men; but there is a fund of natural feeling which it cannot entirely absorb.

To the Royalist, the blow came at-

tended by that lively sorrow which personal affection excites; and Edward, the exile, rejoining those whom he most loved, asked himself the question—How will they have borne *that* calamity? After a momentary conflict with his feelings, however, he dashed away the starting tears, and, pursuing his way, he came close to the south front of the stately manor of Compton Winyates; a green space had been cleared, and the turf had been mown, and a chair was placed thereon; and there, aged, and fast sinking into her home of eternal rest, sat Lady Arundel; Blanch was beside her, crouching on the turf. Margery stood near; and in that sequestered scene, beneath the blue, calm skies, was the exile welcomed home, was the blessing given by Lady Arundel—the kindly, tearful greeting proffered by Blanch.

Lady Arundel smiled as she saw the hands which she would fain have united, once more clasped in each other. And her memory, which dimly retained the events of *to-day*, ran back, with the tenacity of the aged, to former times; on which the fancy loved, as it seemed, to settle and expatiate.

“I mind,”—she said, as, after their silent recognition, Edward and Blanch re-

clined upon the grass before her, whilst about, around, grew the crested cowslip, and the scentless violet of spring,—“I mind, ye were betrothed, Blanch, my child! Was there not somewhat of a difference between ye?” added the old lady, whose faculties, in a somewhat premature decay, could not dismiss any impression that had once been fixed within her recollection. “Ah, was it so? am I right, Margery?” looking round, as she spoke, at the aged waiting-woman, not much more youthful than herself.

“That was at Wardour, madam,” returned Margery, “where, you know, my lord and lady, and Master Claude (the Holy Mother save him!) are agone, yesterday se’nnight, to bide for ever and ay—as the saying is—”

“Ay, thou must tell Edward all about that, Blanch; my poor head won’t carry it all,” said Lady Arundel with a faint sigh. “Ay, talk to each other of Wardour! and don’t ye fret about what they say hath happened! though I do not—I cannot believe it. God in heaven have mercy on those who they say compassed it!—our royal master’s death!”

There was a solemn silence: then Lady Arundel muttered, in a low voice, “leave me, my children—leave me for a while to

think on these things. Go—roam among the woods, as ye were wont to do at Wardour; Margery can bide with me.”

She was obeyed—but, ere the betrothed, as Lady Arundel would still call them, had reached a sort of dingle, clothed with the hazel, carpeted with the blue bell, into which a grassy walk led; they were recalled by Margery. Lady Arundel wished to speak to them.

“If—” said the venerable lady quickly, for the return of Edward had agitated her—“If—if—supposing I should not have time to say this to ye, unless I say it now; come hither,—ye have been betrothed—why not fulfil the contract ere *I* am taken from ye? Edward, when I go,—and my years are many—my strength is feeble—who will protect my child?”

“O, madam!” cried Blanch, placing her finger upon her aunt’s lips, “did you not promise to keep those thoughts to yourself?—I would not give,” she added, turning to Herbert, “a heart that is not worthy of his,”—she spoke in a low tone; then resumed, after a pause,—“because this weak heart hath a constancy to one thought that must die with it. Edward must have a heart that is *all* his!”

“Ay, and so thine will be!” returned

Lady Arundel calmly, for her nature was to the last one of hope: whilst her intellect declined in force, her heart (that offering which we shall take with all its imperfections, to lay before the judgment throne,) became more excellent—more trusting—more resigned—more kind.

“Ay—ay!” repeated Lady Arundel, as she watched the young people again disappearing in a glade peopled with feathered songsters. “Margery, should my weak head not carry it, do thou mind that she weareth the ruby carcanet which we brought away from Wardour, when they be wed; and that dove-coloured damask kirtle, with the point sleeves,” added Lady Arundel, the languor of old age vanishing beneath the happy influence which trifles, especially when they take up the harmless subject of dress, have over the enfeebled mind of age—cheering it even, sometimes, to the last sigh!

“But, an if she will not have him?” said the less sanguine Margery—

“—Have him? Love him? She must—she doth, Margery!” returned Lady Arundel. “Mark my words—thou art sometimes right, girl,” added the good lady, who thus addressed the waiting-woman of

threescore, "but not always." She spoke with the tenacity of a mistress who felt herself begoverned by her maid — no uncommon case. "They will be wed—they will be wed!"

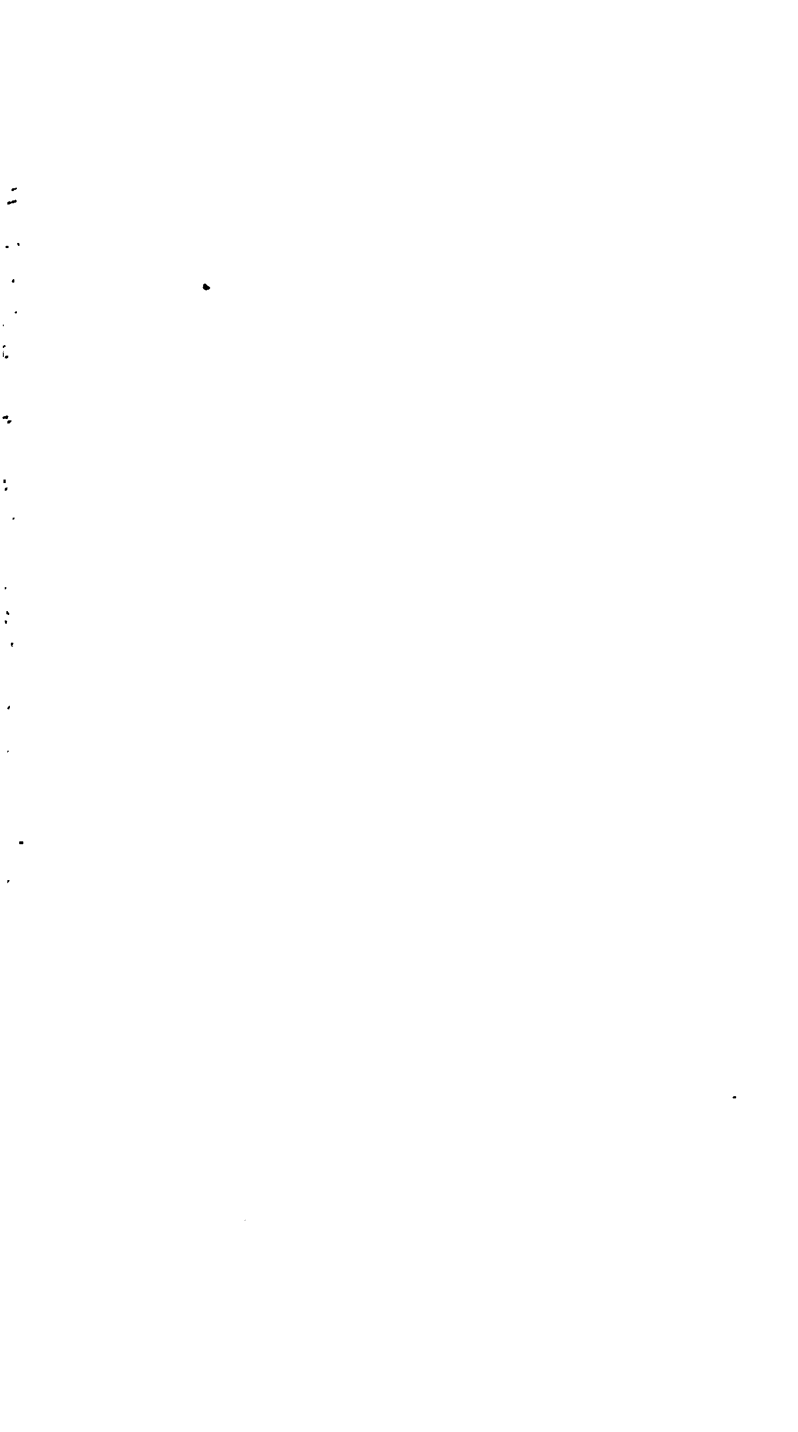
Thus she spoke; and,—since my annals barely extend with any precision beyond the fall of Ragland—I can scarcely pronounce that the prophecy of Lady Arundel was fulfilled.

But Time is mighty in its changes; not alone on the face of things, but on the unseen world within,—the seat of the affections; and, if we could search into the records of the Herbert family,—a numerous race, with a complicated pedigree,—we might, perhaps, discover that, in the affections, the worth, and the graces of the living Edward, Blanch had found the happiness which was denied her with Godolphin.

FINIS.

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